

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 8, 1997

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.15 a.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 1997,

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,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Mr. D. CARTER

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

Mr. O. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed, (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL

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)

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc., Econ. (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance)

Prayers were led by His Honour the Speaker,

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, June 24, 1997.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the Honourable the House of Assembly of its meeting of Tuesday, June 24, 1997, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

Hon. O. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that, Mr. Speaker.

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

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay:

1. The Customs Duties (Dumping and Subsidies) (Amendment) Order, 1997.
2. Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Barbados and the Government of the United States of America for

Cooperation in Preventing and Combatting Criminal Activities, including the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

3. The Agreement between the Government of Barbados and the Government of the United States of America concerning cooperation in Suppressing Illicit Maritime Drug Trafficking; and
4. The Caribbean/United States Summit - Bridgetown Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Habitat II - The Barbados National Report and Plan of Action.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Companies Act be read for the first time.

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

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Public Documents (Exemption from Diplomatic or Consular Legislation) Act be read a first time.

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

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Paramedical Profession Act be read a first time.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 5 - TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF BARBADOS

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$124 535 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 1997-98 AS SET OUT IN SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 3

HEAD 50 - POST OFFICE - \$124 535

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, before I begin, I wish to draw Honourable Members' attention to a document which would be on your table entitled Amendment to Explanatory Note. That document has to be read together with the Resolution.

What is before Honourable Members is a Resolution for \$124 535 to provide for the relocation of the St. Philip Post Office from its present location across the road to premises being rented from the Receiver of the Plantations group of companies.

At the same time, the amendment to the Explanatory Note is to provide for an amendment to Head 50 to include as Item 623 provision for installation of air-conditioning system and repairs to the roof at the General Post Office and certain District Post Offices.

Mr. Chairman, this Resolution is occasioned because the St. Philip District Post Office like many other district post offices in Barbados has proven to be too small in 1997 for the proper disposition of the business of a post office. Two in particular come to mind - St. Philip and St. George.

In 1995, I toured the St. Philip Post Office and had a meeting on the site with representatives of the NUPW

and officials of the post office and of MTW. I was quite amazed at what I saw. I remember when that post office was built in the middle 50s. The then Barbados Labour Party Government established that complex at Six Roads that houses the health centre, Princess Margaret School, the library and the post office. Since 1955 approximately, when that complex was built, there has been no expansion of the post office.

All of us in here know that St. Philip has been perhaps the fastest growing parish in Barbados in terms of housing development. I think it was clear that it was necessary for the post office to have been redeveloped over time to keep pace with the other developments to the parish. The truth is that it has not moved on.

I remember on the morning when we visited, there were about 18 postal workers in a room that perhaps is as narrow as from that wall to the end of that window and certainly not as long as from that window to that one. A very cramped space. There was some dilapidation, apart from the narrowness of the working environment. We had a choice to build at the eastern end another wing and create an L shaped wing or seek completely new headquarters for that post office. 11.35 a.m.

In June 1995, a large number of officials from several departments in both of my Ministries went on a site visit to the Plantations site across the road from the post office. We saw there a building which, as it appeared then, and as it still appears to me now, seemed to meet all the criteria for the development in one location of a civic centre, or a public service centre, perhaps, better called.

At the Plantations Building, which is in receivership, there was ample space for a fire depot. There already exist at the back of the building two large doors that would be ideal and could easily accommodate fire tenders and the Fire Department could have the southern end of that building. It can accommodate a court, a police station, a post office, a library and a licensing department.

People from St. Philip have to travel to Oistins to have their vehicles licensed. It is my personal feeling, Sir, I know it is a feeling that is not shared by certain senior public officers, that Government should decentralise many of these services and carry the services to the people where they live.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: When I was talking that, Sir, in 1976, the Honourable Member had not even dreamed of parliamentary representation, 21 years ago.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You had thought of it? All right, Sir. He was in it from 1971.

I am really serious about that, Sir. We are going to be trying something with the Post Office and the Immigration Department very shortly. I have instructed the Chief Immigration Officer to have passport application forms distributed at every post office in Barbados.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I said I have instructed the Chief Immigration Officer to have passport forms stocked at the Post Offices so that persons from the various parishes can go to the Post Office, pick up their passport form, fill it up and carry it in once and for all prepared. Right now what they have to do, they come into town, so they pay one busfare to come into town, pick up the passport form, carry it home, fill it up, pay another busfare and bring it back down, go back home and then come back some weeks after for the passport. So it is a lot of busfare in to-ing and fro-ing. It is a very simple thing we can do to make the departments more customer friendly and customer sensitive. That is one.

I feel, Sir, that at Six Roads, there is a golden opportunity provided to Government for the acquisition of that property and the creation of a centre of public services. What has happened is these matters rest with the Ministry of Housing and Lands which is empowered to conduct negotiations of acquisitions on behalf of Government. Negotiations have been taking place between the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Receiver for the bank who is the individual owner of the property. Those negotiations are quite far advanced but still it has taken two years to reach the stage where they are actually talking money now.

In the meantime, as those negotiations are taking place, it would have made no sense to start construction of an addition wing at the St. Philip Post Office. We have persuaded the staff at the post office, as it were, to hold a little strain pending the completion of the negotiations for acquisition of the Plantations property.

In the meantime, as a result of negotiations with the Union, the National Union of Public Workers representing the staff, we have agreed that as a temporary measure we would rent space in the property at the Plantations Complex to allow the postal workers to transfer their operations from the present site over the road to the Plantations Complex. Space is available.

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Having regard to how the process for negotiation and acquisition, if necessary, of properties go, we cannot keep the workers at the post office in those conditions any longer, It is therefore a temporary measure. I do not ever see them going back to those premises until we make a final decision on what we are going to do about the Plantations property to move them out from their existing location and put them in better premises across the road.

This supplementary is to pay the necessary charges that will be incurred as a result of the relocation charges such as rent, furnishing and equipping the building, providing for the basic furniture, 2 large tables, 20 chairs, 3 cashier stools, 1 desk, 1 executive chair for the Post Mistress and so on,

Sir, that is the first part of the Resolution, the monetary part of it.

The second part of the Resolution relates to the Note. The opportunity is being taken to effect an amendment to the Explanatory Note under Head 50-01 - Object No. 623 to include repairs to the roof at the General Post Office as well as repairs to other District Post Offices. That was left off the printed document when it came through here in March during the Estimates so that the amended Explanatory Note should now read:

"Provides as it is, for the installation of aircondition systems at and repairs to the roof of the General Post Office and work at other District Post Offices."

At the General Post Office we are doing quite a substantial refurbishment. That building is now about 15 years old and not a lot has been done on it. We did some work last year and in the nature of things we have to do some maintenance every year. The roof has been leaking and we have had a firm on board, I think it is called "Rooftec" or some such firm. They have been redoing the whole of the roof of the Post Office.

We are moving out the Parcel Post Department for a few weeks. It should not exceed a month to factory space that is available in Wilkey while we redo the Parcel Post section. We are also doing some work on the electrics. They have been very bad. As a result of the leaks, water has percolated into the conduit system and from time to time there has been a lot of erosion and so on.. We are trying to do as much to fix up as possible this year, Sir. The note was deficient and we are taking the opportunity now to fill the gap that there was in the note. 11.45a.m.

Other post offices will, as part of the Government's programme of rehabilitation of post offices, benefitted from

additional work this year. Some have been started and completed; we have repainted the one at St. Thomas at Welchman Hall, that is finished. I do not think we have much to do at Eagle Hall, we went on an attack on that last year and there are no more leaks, that roof has been repaired. We are seeking to paint every one and maintain them with minor carpentry and masonry work this year. I do not think there would be any cause for complaints about the maintenance of existing post offices.

What one is finding is that many of those District Post Offices are in the same position as St. Philip. The volume of work has outgrown the existing structure. We have to do some work at St. John Post Office, we have already done the Fire Station there. We said we would look at that and the Building Department are at the moment toying with ideas as to what needs to be done.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We did some work on the Post Office last year but it is still not satisfactory. They need more space and we want to see perhaps how we can merge the Post Office with the Fire Department because there are two properties which are owned by the Crown and are next door.

I have to get the in-house draftsman come up with a plan. I know they have been working on something but I really have not had a chance to follow it up the last three weeks. I cannot tell Honourable, Members exactly how far we are on that, I can only make the House the promise that we will be doing something to that.

What has bothered me is the St. George Post Office, We will have to build a completely new Post Office at St. George. The St. George Post Office is perhaps worse than St. Philip. One morning we went there and there were 19 or 20 people in a room smaller than St. Philip's Post Office. Parking provision for the public is partly on the road and partly on the property, causing a back-up of traffic.

We saw next to the St. George Post Office, a large disused building which was St. George Girls¹ School. It needed a roof but it had a lovely structure. It was an old-time school but the walls were solid and behind that, a more modern structure had been added to it. We had architectural plans drawn, there were provisions in the Estimates this year to rehabilitate that property and create a new Post Office facility giving adequate accommodation, a Police Force, a Licensing Department and if necessary a library and in the back ample, ample parking. Two Fridays ago, M.T.W, went and push it down.

Asides,

that? Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS; You are surprised about
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Asides,

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS; The whole building. Are you surprised about that.

Asides,

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS; I said that money was in the Estimates to deal with that but now we have to start from scratch.

Can you imagine that after all the architectural drawings had been done and submitted to develop this building, similar to what we did at the Police Station where we redeveloped the existing structure and did not get rid of it, M.T.W. went and pushed it down. I could have cried. We now have to start fresh.

We have given instructions for a new building to be designed and a new Post Office will be built there.

I mentioned earlier, Mr. Chairman, that I feel that Government should carry services to the people and I will be glad and grateful for members' views in this debate. Again, what we had envisaged would have helped the people from St. George. They are going to be delayed now because we have to build a completely new building but again they have to go all the way to Christ Church. Imagine leaving right up the top of St. George and driving across to Oistins to get your driver's licence renewed or to pay your road tax. I do not think that it is fair especially where you have computerisation, it is a simple matter to set up an office with two people and two computers, have the whole thing linked in from St. George to the place in the Pine and do the whole thing easily.

I have that commitment, Sir. I am trying to push it as hard as possible. I know that there are others, not among politicians, who oppose the idea of decentralisation.

With those few words, Sir, and a brief overview of some of the plans of the Minister of Home Affairs in relation to Post Offices, I beg to move that Head 50 stands part.

Hon. R. N. OREENIDOE: I rise to second this Resolution.

This is not, Mr. Chairman, the first time that I would have spoken on the cramped conditions at Six Roads Post

Office. I did so, Mr. Chairman, in a previous debate when I outlined the conditions at Six Roads. I must say that I wholeheartedly support the idea to relocate the workers there into the adjoining Plantations property because I believe that they would perform a better service if they were placed in surroundings such as the one at Plantations. I must say that in my capacity as Minister of Labour and also as Parliamentary Representative for St. Philip North, I join with all those who have been agitating for this move. The N.U.P.W., the Attorney General and other interested parties have been all calling for better working conditions for those who are employed at the St. Philip Post Office. 11.55a.m.

Mr. Chairman, the business of the post office, and indeed the number of postmen have virtually outgrown that post office. That post office, Mr. Chairman, would have been good enough when you had about 6 or 8 postmen operating at Six Roads. That post office is the same size as when I was going to school. It has not changed at all. It is the same size as when I was teaching next door at Princess Margaret School and in the meantime the number of postmen for instance would have quadrupled or more than quadrupled. As I am saying the place remains the same cramped place.

In fact I recall that maybe 3 years ago one postman actually likened and described the post office there as the dark hole of Calcutta. It has just one door. You go into this door and there is no other door at all in that building. This cannot be good enough for the dozens of workers there. If something explodes in that post office there has to be a mad rush for this one door. It just cannot be fair to them.

The point I am making, Mr. Chairman, is if that post office had to be subjected today to the scrutiny of the Labour Department or the scrutiny of the Town and Country Planning Department I believe it would fail, Mr. Chairman, with flying colours.

The other thing is that it is within my knowledge that it was about 6 to 8 years ago that one postman had what we call the red eye and I am sure that because of the cramped conditions in there and I am not making any pun on it but in the twinkling of an eye everybody inside the post office had red eye as well. If you have got the flu at Six Roads the postmen tell you all of them catch it. They cannot turn without bouncing into each other. I believe that postmen nowadays at Six Roads want to rush and get out of the post office as fast as they possibly can. They do not want to hang around. That is the situation.

I believe that a better Six Roads Post Office will mean a better service for the people of St. Philip and

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I strongly support the idea of having them transferred next door where they will be working under better conditions,

I too share die view, Mr, Chairman, that the time has come for us to look at die possibility of asking the people of St, Philip to pay things like their road taxes and drivers licence fees and so on at Six Roads, I think the time has come for them to do that because Six Roads is an extremely busy area by itself,

There are many other things that happen there at Six Roads, People go there for myriad of things, They go there for their pensions, for money orders, There is an express mail service there, Telephone bills, water bills, light bills, Rediffusion bills are paid there, For the volume of work that passes through there you would hardly think that all of that has to be done in a little two by two place,

The toilet facilities there, If you had to go into Six Roads and see what is really the lunchroom, It is not as big as the square here where the Clerks sit and 4 people can hold in it but all 4 people have to be standing up and just beyond that is where the ladies washroom is, If a lady wants to use the washroom she has to pass through the lunchroom, where about 4 postmen would be standing up to go into the washroom that she has to use, It cannot be good enough,

There has been a leaking roof there for the longest while, asbestos on the top and the discoloured tentess because of the leaks, It is appalling really to go and see what Six Roads actually looks like,

Mr, Chairman, I believe, as the Attorney General has said, that St, Philip has grown rapidly and as he said perhaps faster than any other parish in Barbados because when that post office was built we had none of the housing developments that I have outlined on about two or three times in this House already, We did not have any Ruby Park. We did not have any Mangrove or any Crane Park, We did not have any Atlantic Park, any Inch Cape, Coles and still the post office has remained the same way.

Mr. Chairman, you would not believe that in this day and age we have a post office that has no car park facilities. Even when you apply now to have a little mini mart one of the conditions that they give, yes you may build it but you must have car park facilities.

We have a situation at Six Roads where at the post office, you either park by the road and block traffic going into the Princess Margaret School or you go to the other side where the Library is and there is a little something of a car park but it is very choked and very uncomfortable.

Even on the outside of the post office where people would come and wait for their pensions and so on that is so small. I have passed already and I have seen that line extended virtually into the road by die gate and the rain was drizzling and some of die people from St, Philip were outside there standing up because they could not get into that little space to get into the line to get their pensions,

I hope, Mr, Chairman, as die Attorney General has said they will not have to go back. I do not anticipate any repairs to the roof only and no expansion in terms of size, I would hope that when they return or if they have to return at all, it would be in a different building altogether or that they would simply stay over where they have been relocated, Obviously, I am thinking that Government will in due course purchase that particular area and they will remain over there, What I can say is that I believe that this is one of the few occasions that we are seeing something positive being done for the workers there at Six Roads Post Office and I support die idea,

I must say that I agree to die rental of die space next door to accommodate die postmen and the other workers at Six Roads, Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon, D, J. H, THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Opposition has no difficulty hi supporting this measure, There are a couple of questions that we have but I wish to concur as a regular user of that post office myself with die comments which have been made by the Honourable Member for St, Thomas and the Honourable Member for St, Philip North. 12.05 p.m.

For example, if you go to that post office to collect a package as I do, of books, die postman bringing it to you has to wait until die corridor is cleared. He has to take it off a shelf where anybody passing on die road looking through the window can see all of the items which are being stored.

There are no facilities for parking and that brings me to another point about Six Roads which is that die conditions at that post office are horrendous. There is not even an area for die postmen to park their motorcycles. The motorcycles have to be hauled up die stairway about four or five steps and parked to the side by the entrance of the post office door and there is often not enough room for all of the motorcycles.

The building is inadequately lighted. So I believe that the time has come for a decision to be made about the future of the post office. I assume that what the Minister is saying is that these arrangements are temporary until some decision can be made about where die post office would

be located. There are 18 postmen for St. Philip, as I understand it, and 18 persons in an area such as that clearly one wonders how much longer that situation could have obtained. That is just the postmen and then you have other officers. So, it is definitely an urgent need and it is a need which we support and I believe that in this time the taxpayers' money would be wisely utilised.

The concept of decentralisation of services makes sense in some scenarios. It may very well make a lot of sense in relation to St. Philip and I urge the Government to carry out a proper study which takes into account bus routes. Because this is one of the very important factors in relation to decentralisation, that it may be more difficult for somebody living in Gemswick or Bottom Bay or those areas at the southern tip of St. Philip to get to Six Roads in terms of bus routes than it is for them to go to Bridgetown. This is one of the problems that I have found as the representative of a rural area with a facility that is placed almost out of the range of any settlement. I am referring to District "C" Court and Police Station and the offices for the Marshal. It is easier for some people in St. John to get to town. In fact, right now because the Court is located in St. Matthias, a lot of people find that much more convenient than what would have obtained if you had to leave Edgecliff or Foster Hall to get to District "C"¹¹.

So, I believe that the planning of it has to be very careful and Government has to ensure that the bus routings are such that those facilities, if you are saying that they should be decentralised are more accessible. I agree that the location of the Court, not necessarily the police station but certainly the Court, it would make sense to move it to Six Roads and I believe that those other facilities which require customer contact, the post office, licensing, the courts, the maintenance, the Marshal's offices, those are offices that I agree should be located in a more central area like Six Roads.

While on the point of Marshals, Mr. Chairman, if you give me the latitude, I just want to remind the Minister who is also responsible for that, that you have 18 postmen servicing St. Philip, but I believe you only have one or two Marshals. This is a serious matter and the terms and conditions of postmen, as bad as they may be, are a lot better than the terms and conditions of Marshals. They are not given the allowances I think for travel, they are not given motor cars, they have to walk around late at night trying to catch people as they come off a bus to serve them with summons and that kind of thing. So, they are functioning in more treacherous conditions with inadequate security, inadequate facilities and as I say, there is one Marshal who is covering an area which 18 postmen are covering and with a workload far in excess of that of a postman. Because a postman can drop the mail at your

house and go along whether you get it or not, but a Marshal has to come into direct contact with the person. So I believe that the Minister also needs to look at the situation regarding the Marshals in those rural areas and particularly in St. Philip and St. John, those operating out of District "C" District.

Now regarding the actual Six Roads property, we would like to be assured by the Government that it is scrupulous about the evaluation which is being placed on that property. I am not an expert in that field, but there are some engineers and other people who have made the point that sometimes those newer buildings, like the Six Roads building which is not used, tend to deteriorate much faster than for example, if you abandon the same St. Philip Post Office. I am certain that some of the public baths, the one in Massiah Street, if you cleared the bush, painted the walls and put in some plumbing it could be operational in a couple of weeks. Many of those newer buildings, like the one at Six Roads, even passing on the road, you can see that there has been substantial deterioration to that structure.

I hope that the Government is conscious of that and that it will be prudent in coming to any decision about the purchase of that Six Roads property. Which brings me to another point that notwithstanding the point that most of those developments in Six Roads are recent, I still get the sense that Six Roads continues, not just because of the convergence of those six roads but because of the way in which development has been planned, it still continues to be a major traffic hazard. There is no parking for the post office, the children get off the bus on the road going to four roads, walk through the back behind the gas station and people come tearing down from Groves to Six Roads. On mornings there is always a build-up of traffic, people passing, some people cut across to go onto that road which leads to Groves, I cannot remember the name of it. There are people coming from all angles. There are people stopping to turn into the gas station. There are people stopping to turn into the Health Centre. Children crossing the road to go to Chefette and I would like to know if Government is carefully analysing what is necessary to improve the flow of traffic and safety generally, in that area of Six Roads.

I do not think there is anybody who lives in St. Philip who does not approach Six Roads with great trepidation, at any hour of day or night and therefore I think that is something that needs attention. Adequate parking facilities and arrangements for vehicular traffic should be a priority in any development plans which are in place for Six Roads and I suspect that when Government has finished its work on that road from St. Patricks or wherever, to Six Roads that there will be an even larger volume of traffic. I

avoid that road because it is really awful, but I am certain that you would get a larger volume of traffic, the traffic which now goes on Oldbury Road will probably divert to that road, and some of the traffic which may avoid Six Roads altogether will be converging on that junction.

So it is very important that that matter be considered and I am still surprised that there are not a lot more accidents at that Six Roads area. 12.15 p.m.

Although I thank God it has not happened. I believe that attention needs to be paid to that issue of proper planning and I always question it because the Ministry of Agriculture made a big song and dance about the vendors' market. Personally, it has been a waste of money. I am not saying that a facility should not be put down for vendors, but I am certain that the Minister of Agriculture must agree with me that that has been a phenomenal waste of money.

There is no time that I have passed there, even on Saturday mornings, that more than 2 of those brand new vendors' stalls are open. There must have been several other areas where the Ministry in carrying out proper planning could have located those stalls to give the vendors maximum advantage of the traffic. I do not pass that way often because, very regrettably, there was a tragedy some years ago where two children had drowned in a pond and each time I pass that house it brings back the memory. So I do not pass on that route.

I know from the few times I have passed on Saturdays and in the week that that facility at Six Roads has basically not met the objectives which the Ministry of Agriculture said it wanted to achieve. What is the Ministry going to do about that now? Let us not have that kind of planning again where resources are wasted and where the government trumpets that it is entering into a programme to give people new opportunities and yet, at the end of the day, the facilities on which thousands of taxpayers' money is being spent or is purported to be spent - I hope "the Ministry of Finance is carrying out the investigation on the expenditure of money on public markets which we expect. If not we will have to back it up. I am sure the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would be very interested as I would as a member of the public that that matter is properly resolved.

I hope that the money that has been spent in St. Philip that has gone into the construction of stalls and not into other activities unidentifiable at this stage will bring some return to the community in St Philip and that Government is not approaching this issue of Six Roads in

a haphazard manner where one week a new public market emerges, the next week they decide they are going to put in a new facility for licensing and the next week you have another facility for something else, but that we have a clear idea about what is likely to be happening at Six Roads.

I understand there was a recent town hall meeting in relation to the roads from Six Roads to St. Patrick which was well attended and it would have been a good idea if at that time Government might have been able to announce more fully its plans for the entire Six Roads area. I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church East as an M.P. for part of that area was present at that meeting and I am certain he will agree with me that it would have provided a good opportunity with those numbers present to explain what is happening in terms of the development of the entire Six Roads area and this is not viewed as a haphazard exercise.

Finally, any attempt which the Honourable Member for St Thomas makes to upgrade the facilities in St John, at the post office, would be welcome. And in view of the expenditure on the fire station which is right next door, I wonder whether in circumstances like that Government could not have shared facilities utilised. For example, common lunchrooms and other kinds of common facilities so that you do not have a situation in which you have a post office functioning autonomously but under the same Ministry, a fire station and other facilities but where there is some utilisation of Government's resources to die maximum possible, by using shared facilities. I think that is something that should be considered.

The St. John Post Office is located in a busy junction and there is very little passing there. People tend to wait there for the bus but they really could not be space for more than 2 or 3 motor vehicles to pass at any given time and I compliment the Minister on his work on the fire station and I hope that he will be able to extend the Ministry's budget to accommodate some further renovations to include the St. John Post Office.

Regarding the St. George Post Office I do not know the facts surrounding the matter. I am certain the Honourable Member for St George North will confirm or deny his involvement in the licking down of an entire building.

Anyway, we give support to the development All of these post offices need to be refurbished, those rural ones which are not in good physical condition. The Government, as far as we are concerned, will be given our support in any efforts to upgrade the facilities in rural areas in Barbados.

With those few words, Mr. Chairman, we give our support to this Resolution and I want to compliment the postmen and the postal staff at Six Roads for the fact that they have endured the conditions through difficult times, almost without murmur, and that now it is time for them to see the benefits of the sacrifice which they have made and to say how grateful the people of St. Philip and the surrounding districts are to them for that sacrifice and the fact that they have worked under very difficult circumstances. The House is unanimous in its support for upgrading the facilities to ensure that their working conditions improve dramatically,

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN; Mr, Chairman, I welcome the efforts being made by Government to improve the physical conditions under which the postal services in the rural areas are administered, I want to say that I am of the view that there is a need for a complete rethinking of the role of the post office within the higher echelons of the postal administration service,

Today, the postal services in any country in the world are subjected to immense competition from the private sector integrated parcel -delivery services and we in Barbados have branches of many of these international organisations that operate from Barbados.

As far as external parcel post is concerned, there is intense competition. Internally, there is also competition which is arising from the rise of telecommunication services and today much of the communication which in the past would have taken place by letter writing or letter delivery is now taking place by fax machine and soon to be internet services as they are called using the Internet, So the post office must understand that it cannot rest on its laurels, It has to study the impact of these developments.

Many post offices in the world, as I understand it from what I have been able to read, are acutely conscious of this, There is also no doubt that the physical conditions under which the postman works do not lend themselves to encouraging the postman to make that extra effort. 12.25 p.m.

Today we are dealing, Sir, with St. Philip but I also want to draw to the attention of all Honourable Members, and I know that the Minister responsible is aware that as long ago as the middle 1980s, it was recognised that the physical conditions the postmen worked in the southern zone, and particularly at Oistins and Worthing was -such, given the developments that were taking place in the rise in the number of houses in that area, that there was a need for a new post office and much larger facilities.

Now, unfortunately, the structure was put and it is still there, I would like to call for immediate resumption of work on the Post Office at Oistins because my constituents have been complaining bitterly about lost business which they are suffering as a result of the congestion at Worthing and Oistins and mail is being delivered long after the deadlines.

I want to say, Sir, it is not only in that area we are having problems, It is the general view of many business people in Barbados that the internal delivery service of mail has slipped to the point where many people suffer loss because of the lateness of the delivery, I do not know what is the system but I know repeatedly people are complaining about it,

As far as St. Philip is concerned, I am very glad to see that the Lord has given us the opportunity to implement something that was very dear to me and that is, the decentralisation of Government's services in Barbados. We were bold enough in the 1980s to put it in our Manifesto that we would have sub-towns in Oistins and Central St, George. I am going to deal with that because I am very disturbed at something like that related is happening and I am going to give my views frankly on that.

St, Philip was earmarked. As a matter of fact, so impressive were these proposals that in order to blunt the obvious impact the Other Side had to say that our Manifesto consisted of a Tale of Cities because it was clear that St. Andrew, St. Peter, the northern part, St. Philip, central St. George and, of course Oistins town, these were far reaching thoughts about decentralisation; creating the physical infrastructure. I hope we will be able to implement it during this term of office. I want to be part of it.

During this term of office, I am very glad to see that the Government has decided, as a matter of urgency, that the concept of decentralising services will take place and we must not be ashamed of the fact that we are carrying out a programme. We should be proclaiming it from abroad.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Now, Sir, when the developments take place down by Checker Hall and so maybe the Honourable Member will get a town too.

The second point I want to deal with is this, Sir. I am very disturbed that the building in central St. George has been knocked down. That building was earmarked for the creation in those days of an alternate court to

District "B" for the further development of the post office and many of those things, That was a joint venture, People fail to recognise that was a joint venture between the Church and the Government, We removed many houses,

There were a large number of houses on the pasture where cricket is played and the contribution of the Government was to remove the Government services off the Church's land so the Church could develop that as a property development scheme in order that they would realise the fruits of the valuable land they have, I do not understand how it could be possible for anybody at all in Barbados to knock down that building,

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: They allowed it to become derelict and then knocked it down,

As I understand it, the Honourable Attorney General and Minister told us that plans were created. So how can the right hand in the civil service not know what the left hand is doing? I say openly that the case for reform of the public service is a matter of tremendous urgency. There should be some kind of mechanism within the public service to review how something like that could occur. On the one hand you have plans for the development of a building and on the other hand another branch of the public service would go and lick it down. I cannot understand it. There is obviously a lack of communication.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: When the Honourable Member becomes a Minister one of these days he will learn and understand that as a Minister he does not have as much power as he thinks he has. The Honourable Member will learn that very early, No. 1, they are not going to give him the files he should see to understand what is going along. He can talk all of that but unless you keep your ears to the ground you will know that the public service has a lot of power. If they are going to exercise their power in that way they have to be called to account.

Politicians cannot dismiss any public servants. I am sorry the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is not here because he in his frustration once tried to do it but he had to be reminded by a former Prime Minister that is the role of the Public Service Commission. All he has to do is to bear the frustration, pick up his pen and write to the Public Service Commission. TMT is all you can do. I think some kind of machinery should be in existence for us to understand how this could happen. It should not happen because it really frustrates the objects of the Government.

Aside,

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sometimes I marvel because they have over 1 800 derelict buildings in St. Michael and they cannot get them knocked down but they can knock down a Government building. It is really remarkable. I know my friend for Christ Church East Central is trying his desperate best to get a building knocked down so they can build a proper community centre at Gall Hill and they cannot get that down. So they frustrate him there but they take a bulldozer and knock down the one in St. George that the Government had planned for.

These are things that all of us as parliamentarians should be concerned about because it shows that the so-called machinery we have in the independence of the civil service, with the disciplinary machinery we have outside the hands of the politicians, that it just does not function in the manner in which it should function. That is another example, I hope the Constitutional Review Commission will have something to say in light of that experience.

I welcome this. I hope during this year work will start on the Christ Church Post Office, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to speak on this particular debate because we tend to believe that by giving people beautiful buildings that we are going to solve the problems of the postmen and postwomen of this country.

As we are aware, Sir, this is the rainy season and the postmen and women are asked to go every morning at 7.30 o'clock to collect mail and by 9.00 o'clock they have to be back on the road again taking that mail from the Post Office to all constituents. 12.35 p.m.

They should not be allowed to just put mail on a cycle, go into a house and the mail is left out there unprotected. I am saying that they should be given the adequate provision where they can get duty free cars because they are delivering a service for the Government and it should not be seen as giving them anything luxurious. What is wrong with giving a postman a duty free car. There is nothing wrong with that. I am saying that the mail must be regarded as something important and when the postman gets out his car and lock his car, he is sure that nobody can tamper with the car by the time he goes through an alley to deliver a piece of mail and come back.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying that if he has to leave it on a cycle many of those pieces of mail may disappear. Next time the postman will be accused of carrying away mail and all of that business. I am saying that provision must be given to stop that type of charge against postmen in this country.

I am also saying, Sir, and this is not a criticism of the person who has mentioned it because I honestly believe that he is doing his part to make sure that the property at Six Roads is transferred to his department, but I want to know in this Assembly, how come over a year ago we heard about negotiations going on to get the Six Roads Complex transferred to Government and it cannot be done but since that, Sir, we saw a situation where the same Ministry was able to acquire land and abandon the land the same time, in less than a year. I want to know the reason for that.

I want to know how come civil servants can be so efficient on one hand and not so otherwise on another hand. I want to know, Sir, because if what I am hearing in here today is true, I am saying that Government should have owned that property ever since. It should have been treated as a priority case but it appears to me that when you are dealing with property that accommodate civil servants, it is nothing big, they should remain in dilapidated conditions and nobody sees it as a priority case because it is poor people but when you are accommodating the case of somebody who can control their own destiny, everything can happen within one year.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that it is time for this foolishness to stop. The Civil Service Commission and the civil servants must do something about this. For over a year, I heard about these small rooms that postmen have to work in and nothing has been done until today but when...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am talking about it in this Chamber. The acquisition of land was happening like that before 1994 but not the abandonment. You better leave me alone.

I am saying, Sir, that in the rural debate, I asked for the decentralisation of services so that people in St. Lucy would not have to come town. It is in Hansard. Every time somebody leaves St. Lucy to come town for a passport form, it is a day's pay. I feel there should be some law to charge Government when they have to do things like that because the Government has a right to make sure that those services are placed in such a location that people can have easy access to them.

If somebody from North Point in St. Lucy wants to license a vehicle, they have to travel to St. James. If they want to pay a water bill, they have to do the same thing. That is not fair. I am saying, as the Minister quite rightfully said, that in this age of computer, there is no reason why an officer from each department that deals with these matters cannot be stationed at that particular location.

I am also saying that the same way that Six Roads have problems, they have problems at St. Lucy Post Office too. I am asking the Minister to make sure that that is also expanded and the space that the Welfare Department has right now, that some alternative location be found for it and give the Post Office that space. Talking about the Welfare Department, I believe there is a need for it.

The type of foolishness going on in Barbados today where, you write the Welfare Department and the Welfare Officer is doing his job and then some Minister tells him that you have to write him to get things done, I think that it is time that this foolishness be stopped. We either are going to give the civil servants power and allow them to do what they have to do and also stop shortchanging Ministers, because that is exactly what is going on in this country. The National Assistance Board cannot perform, the Welfare Department cannot perform.

I wrote many letters to the Welfare Department and the National Assistance Board and I am now to turn around, like a fool, and write to somebody else. I am not doing it. If you want information from me, go to those departments that I have written or ask me for a copy. I might do it for you.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I sent it to Judge Gap that is true. I should have put it in Six Men's and not in Half Moon Fort.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that it is time that civil Servants be treated properly in this country and we do not spend a year or two telling people what should be done but we spend that amount of time making sure that things that should be done to benefit those people, that they are done.

I am not prepared to come in this Parliament every year to hear that whenever there is a case for what people regard as the small man out there that it takes two years on a simple matter but when it is something that affects the rich man of this country, by a stroke of the pen, it is finished. I am not party to that, Mr. Chairman. If you are, I am not. It is time, as politicians, that we stand up in

this Assembly and state our case because I think there are too many of us, who for political reasons, come to this Assembly every Tuesday and stifle their conscience. They have problems...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, this is Six Roads because I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North must take a greater stance on this particular case because it has been two years now that this has been mentioned in this House of Assembly and nothing has been done about it and he is getting up and saying that he is grateful for what will be done. Not what will be done, you should have been grateful for what has been completed. You are misleading your people, it is time that you get up and tell some of your Ministers that it is time for action. Do not come and promise the people of St. Lucy anything because if they do not get it within one month, I am going to tell you all where to get off.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: St. John? We will deal with that in due course of time. The next Prime Minister will know who to put in the right position and who not to put in the right position.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that we must be serious in this Assembly. We have come here to look after the interest of the poor in this country and things must be done at a speed acceptable to them and the same way a guy from Sandy Lane, whether he is a Chairman or not can write Ministers and get action the next day, I believe the postmeff at Six Cross Roads, have a right to get action too.

Talking about the bulldozer and the building. This is a serious matter. It seems to me, Sir, that this term 'derelict building'¹ is a funny, funny thing. It seems to me now that anybody can look at any property and call it 'derelict'¹ and push it down the next day just to put up units. All of a sudden there is some unit craze in this country where people are prepared to push down everything just to put up housing units.

I would not call it political gerrymandering but it appears to me, Sir, that there is a policy in place in this country where people all of a sudden know where to put people. I hope it is not for political reasons. I am sounding a warning today on the Floor of this House that if I cannot trust a land acquisition in this House, I cannot trust commissions, whether it be urban commissions, rural commissions. Everything that comes to this Assembly now

I would have to look through the back door to see what is going through the back door. 12.45 p.m.

It is clear to me, Sir, that you are not sure in this Assembly anymore what is the true purpose of anything coming in front of you. I am extremely grateful to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas ...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: My leader does not have to worry about me. He knows where I stand.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that we must continue to make sure that the people at Six Roads continue to get adequate working conditions and those working conditions must also include duty free cars. It is wrong for Members to get in here and criticise the late delivery of mail when they do not want to walk through the rain but at the same time they want the postmen to walk through the rain to deliver mail. I am saying that if you want early delivery of mail you must make sure you give the postmen duty free cars.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I welcome this opportunity to make it clear that the complex at Six Roads...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member would you hold a second please?

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I welcome this opportunity to speak on the performance of this Government and especially the Attorney General in trying to improve the lot of postmen, the lot of policemen, in fact, Sir, the lot of civil servants under his Ministry. One notices that since 1994 the same postmen that we are talking about receive duty free concessions for their cycles and I believe that the postmen accepted the offer and they used the opportunity to buy new cycles. I believe that cycles are more suited to postmen and they like them because they move in and out of tracks and small roads.

I believe, Sir, that the Six Roads complex is very cramped to house 18 postmen and about 3 clerks. It is about 200 square feet. Therefore facilities have to be provided for the persons who work at that complex. Members were talking about negotiations which took place between the Government since 1995 dealing with

the Plantations Complex but negotiations do not just take place overnight. Since 1995 negotiations have been taking place to purchase the Six Roads complex but we cannot abandon negotiations like that. There has to be an ongoing process where valuations have to be done by both parties. So Government is still interested in purchasing the complex.

We have just ended a short-term lease where we will be providing a small portion of that complex for the postmen of Six Roads. So I just want to tell the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that prudent bargaining is being undertaken, that we are not going to buy the property for the money that the owners want, we have to negotiate and therefore we cannot just come overnight and accept the offer that was put to us by the owners. The Government is still interested in the purchase of the Six Roads complex.

Now as far as the buildings at the Glebe are concerned it was a previous administration of this Government that decided that the Glebe, the St. George Girls' School and other buildings within the St. George area would make a nice place for decentralisation of Government offices and the St. George Girls' School was earmarked.

Now this site was declared derelict by the previous administration and I understand that a letter was actually sent out by a previous Minister that this site was to be cleared. It has been cleared and it was unfortunate that communications did not take place as we would want but I believe that the party has since then recognised his mistake and I hope that we can go forward. I am sure the Attorney General has taken steps to correct the problems that...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. George North is misleading this House, Sir. He is giving the impression, Sir ...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You think this is a board meeting that you are chairing? You are a Minister, not a Chairman,

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Continue.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. George North is misleading the House, Sir. He is giving the House the impression that the Democratic Labour Party Government was the one that demolished the property in St. George.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am saying, Sir, that a previous administration gave the instruction that this site should have been pushed down. They claimed that it was derelict. Since we came to office we recognised that this structure still had something in it and that it could have been used for the renovation of the police outposts, a new post office and also other buildings. Also the Barbados National Bank has plans for a small outlet at the site hence the decentralisation of offices. We were committed in a previous administration up to 1986. All the plans were drawn, funds were left in the Estimates of 1986. When the new administration took over in 1986 all the plans to decentralise were abandoned. The entire decentralisation office within central St. George was abandoned by the previous administration. When we came to office we recognised that in keeping with our previous commitment that the linkage between Oistins, Belleplaine and Glebe was a central plan. It was important and therefore we have recommenced our negotiations.

I am sure that the Attorney General has already outlined what the plans are to help create the programme that we had started and indeed put in place. I believe, Sir, that over the next year or so we hope that the plans that the Attorney General has outlined will come to fruition and that we will see the building going up in central St. George, we will see the market facility, we will see the return of the linkage between Oistins and the Glebe and we would see the linkage between the Glebe and the outer parts of St. John and northern areas. 12.55 p.m.

So that this concept of renovating government properties is important and one must understand that this administration is making sure that the civil servants live under proper conditions.

I must say that since we came to office the lot of the civil servants have been improved. For example, better working conditions, better buildings, better ventilation and they now have hope. They have hope that this administration is doing all in its power to improve the conditions under which they work. All of the post offices across the country are due for renovation. The police stations and the members are aware that a new civil service building will soon be constructed in the Warrens area.

So again, whatever we do, we have taken the interests of the civil servants and they need not fear.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition raised the question of the Marshals. I wish him to be assured that the Government will be looking at the establishment of the Marshals shortly, Sir.

The Government has made it clear, Sir, that the position of the central government is still one which requires that there be careful management of the numbers in the public service. It is true, however, that one has to be always careful of increasing the numbers in the public service because of the impact on government revenues. But no one can deny that since 1991 there has been a large increase in the volume of work which the Marshals have to do.

The Marshals' department, I believe, is the one department in Government which does not benefit from substitutes. So, if a Marshal goes sick, when a Marshal has to go on holiday, you do not get substitutes and there is therefore a problem in finding an adequate number of bodies to do the work which keeps piling up. When a fellow gets sick or is on vacation leave, his work remains there to be done. More and more cases are being fined and you will never get rid of them.

There are two things that I am trying to do, Sir. We have had a submission from the Registrar, when my wife was Registrar, in November 1995 on the need for additional Marshals. That has been analysed in the Ministry, and as soon as my Permanent Secretary returns from holiday next week, I expect that he should be getting after making the relevant submission to the Ministry of the Civil Service.

Secondly, the Court Process Act is in need of amendment and modernisation. I have discussed with the Chief Justice having Mr. Justice Colin Williams do a special study on the position of the Marshals and on the whole Court Process Department and the legislation that presently exists with a view to ironing out the problems and creating a more modern piece of legislation that deals with the problems that have been thrown up since the Court Process Act of 1979.

The Chief Justice has agreed in principle that Mr. Justice Colin Williams can do a study of the report since it is an area that Mr. Williams himself was studying when he was in private practice and I expect that we will be able to get a report which will help us later on.

Pending any report there is a clear need for additional Marshals but that will have to be negotiated between my Ministry, the Ministry of the Civil Service and the Ministry of Finance.

Sir, in relation to sharing facilities between St. John Post Office and St. John Fire Service, I indicated in my opening that because of the proximity of the two buildings,

we are looking at a design that would allow expansion of the St. John Post Office and the question of sharing facilities may be necessary. I do not think it will be necessary, but we want to give the St. John Post Office additional space and we are going to do that, Sir.

There is one post office that is leaking. It is in Holetown and was opened on 2nd of September 1994. Within a year the wood ants had taken over and I received a note this morning, informing me of the leakage. Apart from that I do not think there are any others that are leaking.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South made some interesting points. I am glad that he took the opportunity to introduce the future of the post office and I can report to Parliament that a Paper has been prepared in the Ministry and sent to the Ministry of Finance for analysis of the financial implications for us to restructure the post office, in such a way that there will be no loss of jobs. I say that again because I want the Press to get me right - to restructure and reorganise the post office in such a way that there will be no loss of jobs. 1.05 p.m.

In that regard, I participated in a workshop with postal management and workers at all levels with Mr. Aubrey Armstrong and a plan has been presented by Mr. Armstrong. We, in the Ministry, have looked at it and we have made our own inputs in the plan and we presented to the Ministry of Finance a project for restructuring and reorganising the post office.

Let me say that that exercise has the unions, both sides, NUPW and BWU, involved as active participants with us in the development of the plan. As soon as we hear from Finance who were last asking for a business plan which should have been sent within the last week, we are going to Cabinet with an information bill to explain to Cabinet what we are doing. The thrust will be to make the post office more competitive, modern and business oriented. Those are the three main principles that will drive the reorganisation and restructuring of the post office.

I will not go into all of that now. We are conscious of the competition that we get, particularly from the courier services, Federal Express and DHL which are in competition with the post office express mail service.

I have discussed with the postal management and there is a video that has been done by GIS on the need to market the post office. I confess myself to having a mind-set that most of us in here would have that if we

need to send a piece of mail urgently the first thing you tell your secretary is to get Fed Ex or DHL. You never think of the post office. Now that has to be reversed.

I am going to throw myself in this with all the vigour I own as soon as I am finished, a couple of conferences here this month and I will be free. That will give me a little more time for that. I want the public to be aware and every government department should be doing business with the post office. We only need something on GIS programmes on television at night sensitising people. That is all it needs. We do not have to spend a lot of money on high-powered things in the *Advocate* and the *Nation*. Use your own facilities. Government has information facilities.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That is where we are getting competition. Mind you, the revenues of the post office have not been doing badly but we could do even better if we were getting more of that express mail service.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South mentioned the post office in Christ Church. Under the last administration, a steel structure was put up which is now probably 6 years ago, at least 5 in Oistins near the Licensing Authority. It is off the road. You cannot see it too easily. We have had a study done and a report presented and that report says that the steel structure is sound. It is a question of doing block work and building. It is not in this year's plan but we may address that in next year's capital programmes.

I also wish to say that we have been aware of some complaints in St. John and at Worthing Post Office. Those complaints have been investigated and have been dealt with. At St. John it is the workers themselves, the postal workers- up there, that said they are not prepared to work any longer with a particular lady because in their view she was incompetent. That is an internal thing among workers.

At Worthing we are making arrangements. It may have been done towards the end of last week but we decided last week that the person who was incompetent and inefficient at that post office should be transferred elsewhere. Hopefully, not in the same system to transfer her incompetence and inefficiency but transferred from that particular post at Worthing.

Sir, with those remarks, I beg to move that Head 50, as amended stand part.

The question that Head 50, as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one money Resolution in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 1.14 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 8 - THE PARAMEDICAL PROFESSIONS BILL, 1997

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, in moving that this Bill be read a second time, I would wish to share with the House some thoughts on the policy of the Ministry of Health and Environment in relation to the Bill which is before this Honourable Chamber today.

The history of medicine and paramedical professions has, in fact, been a very interesting one where before the development of orthodox medical practice as we know it today, what has been accepted internationally as the western system of medicine, there had been the existence of traditional medicine within communities all across the world. In fact, in Barbados we are familiar with those remedies which utilise the usage of local herbs, plants, roots and barks. To this day there are many Barbadians where when you have a cold, ache or pain would recommend cerasee bush or some other form of bush. One heard about all kinds of remedies.

In fact, people of past generations, though it is not as popular now, will tell you that very often once a

week or once a month all the children lined up in front of their mother for doses of castor oil, bushes mixed from various roots which they had to take with a pinch of salt, or sugar, or some good lashes if they refused to take them. There are many persons of advanced age who will tell you that to this day they are firm in the belief that it was this use of herbal medicines and non-traditional approach to medicine of homeopathic remedies that allowed them to live to a ripe old age and to remain in relatively good health.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Part of that generation, Mr. Speaker, persons who were born after 1960, did not have this regimen of non-traditional medicine.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. She is giving the impression that people born after 1960 did not get those types of remedies. That is not true.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member himself was born before 1960 and therefore can only speak to what happened within his generation.

It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that over the years we really have evolved into a ^society which will run down to the drugstore and buy patented medicine as opposed to the traditional remedies. In fact, many of today's mothers and housewives can no longer even identify the roots, grasses and herbs which were used to make these remedies nor can we say in what proportions how they are truly mixed, which combination of herbs, roots or bushes will treat what particular illness.

It is believed though, Sir, that even while in Barbados we have moved more towards the patented form of medicine and the orthodox form of medical treatment in our approach that to this day the World Health Organisation statistics tell us that only 40 per cent of the world's population are treated by the kind of health systems that we have come to know, accept and take for granted here in Barbados, but that 60 per cent of the world's population still rely on traditional medicine. That is what these kinds of herbal folk remedies and community remedies, many of long tradition passed down from generation to generation over many years, what they are called, traditional medicine, whereas the health care system that has evolved over time with the patented medicines in use is known as orthodox medicine.

I was speaking in terms of the development of medical practice over the years. There was a point at

which there existed what was known historically as the physic. The physic was a university trained practitioner.

I see the Honourable Member for St. Michael South looking up but this was long before his time even. The physic was the university trained practitioner who in the health care system such as it existed in the 17th Century and earlier looked after people within the society but the focus of his care tended to be the middle and upper classes.

There was less of a middle class then as we know it now but, certainly, there were people who were better off than the poor classes and industrialised societies. Societies of various social types of development could boast of having an upper class and it was to those persons to whom the physics catered. As I said, they catered primarily to the well-to-do and charged very high fees so that the poor could not access their services. Existing within that service simultaneously was the whole tradition of folk medicine which had been passed on from generation to generation which involved the use of the herbal medicine and the folk remedies and community remedies to which I had earlier alluded. Over time a system of patented medicine started to evolve. As a matter of fact, this led to great exploitation.

I am sure that many Honourable Members will recall seeing westerns on television or movies dealing with the development of the due west and south-west of the United States. You would see people in wagons coining to sell bottles of medicinal preparations which they would claim can cure all illnesses in- man or beast by either oral application or they would sell embrocations of various types which they would say really was a cure for all. There was, in many cases, no substance in these medicines. They would be run out of towns. I am sure we have all seen this kind of practitioner on television. That was part of the evolution of medical treatment in the United States and throughout the world.

Existing also as part of the medical system at that time which was not organised in the way that we have organised health care systems today was a system of medicine for charity because you will recognise that in the systems I detailed, the physic did not treat the lower classes who had recourse only to the folk remedies but clearly they would also have needed from time to time to use the skills and services of a trained practitioner or trained physic.

There was a system organised so that physics could give their services to the lower classes, as they were then considered, who could not afford to pay their fees. Over time more structured health care systems evolved and with the development of medical science and the rise

in chemical manufacturing, increasingly patented medicines were developed and came into common use. They became very much part of the way that the trained physician who then started to give care to all social classes who could afford the fees, except in systems where there was a provision by the Government or by the institution to allow persons who could not afford, access to the care, part of the patented medicine then became part of the way that patients were treated.

All of us would know from our experiences of going to doctors and being given medications whether they are preparations by the druggist, whether they are mass produced preparations, whether they are cough medicines or other medications to be taken orally, tablets, injections and so on, all of that is how medicine has developed.

However, in recent times, what has been happening in medicine is that once again there is a greater reliance today on traditional medicine, the holistic practitioner and the herbalist. In fact, as medical science has evolved and as there has become a capacity for greater and more specialised type of diagnoses in medicine, so too has developed a system where medical care has become very specialised. 2.45 p.m.

Once upon a time you could go to the doctor and this doctor would treat all ailments but now we know that there are cardiologists, we know that there are people who practise invasive cardiology. We know of internists and people who specialise within the overall branch of medicine.

Similarly, new branches of speciality are being developed all of the time. Podiatry is a relatively new postulation of medicine which has been developed and is practised in parts of the world principally in the United States, but yet in Barbados I do not believe that we have as yet any podiatrists practising but that will happen over time as more and more we adopt what is happening in the rest of the world.

In recent times, however, there have, I think, been two developments. First of all, more and more persons are trying to take control of their own health and well-being. The notion that good health care is really about self-care has got greater credence. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, who I am told is regularly in the gym and eats very carefully, I do not know, I am just told. It is a fact that doctors and health care specialists and people in health care systems are saying that it is a reality that though medical science can sometimes cure us when we take medicine, the fact is that we cannot be restored, depending on the nature of the illness, to a

complete state of wellness. Our quality of life is compromised, our bodily integrity is compromised, and thus increasingly we see high incidences of chronic diseases and other diseases that the doctors cannot cure and it really becomes an issue of control.

Because of this recognition that good health care is really about good self-care and because people have become more educated, more well-informed, they are able themselves from the Internet and from reading various forms of information to understand about the care of their bodies and development of illness and the cure of illness and so. People have become more questioning of the medical practitioner.

There was a time, for instance, when people of my grandmother's generation, who have now passed on, would go to the doctor and would not ask the doctor to explain what was wrong. Whatever language the doctor used, they would just come home and tell you that the doctor gave them some tablets, medicine or injection. Such was the esteem in which doctors was held. It was not as questioning a society nor were we as litigious as a society but in recent times people are questioning their medical practitioners more. People are going for second and third opinions and with that development we have seen a greater desire on the part of the individual to care for themselves.

As a result of that, the practise of traditional medicine is once again gaining popularity worldwide. There are persons who are now trained in a number of holistic types of practises, who are servicing people all over the world, who have become very much a part of the medical system and these are persons now to whom the public is going as a first or second choice or as an alternative to the orthodox medical practitioner. People feel that natural substances are better for them, they do not know necessarily what is in a compound when they take a tablet or patented medicine and they prefer to go out there and know what it is they are taking. People believe too, in working more with body in a way that they can better appreciate and understand. The traditional practitioner is once again coming into vogue.

Here in Barbados we have seen a plethora of paramedical practitioners and of holistic practitioners of great repute developing and others who set up shop or come in from overseas and practice, we hear, and then disappear very quickly, making a few dollars.

The development of the paramedical professions in Barbados goes back before the 1970s but the first attempt to regulate the paramedical professions in Barbados which gives support to the medical profession which encompass

a branch of therapeutic medicine and care, some of which are new and some of which are very ancient, like acupuncture, which has been practised by the Chinese for hundreds of years, all of these, there has been an attempt to regulate and to bring about some order within our health care systems as ancillary support to the orthodox medical practitioner,

The Paramedical Council was first established in 1975 to advise of the practise of paramedical persons in Barbados, They were charged with the maintenance of a good standard of paramedical services, The Council comprises the Chief Medical Officer, two paramedical practitioners appointed by the Minister, two paramedical practitioners appointed by the Minister on the recommendation by the Association of Paramedical Practitioners,

Many a time questions were raised about people who we accepted into Barbados to practise holistic medicine or to practise the paramedical profession, There are constraints of whom we accept which are geared at ensuring that a certain high quality of standard and practise is maintained in Barbados, The persons accepted must be able to read, write and speak English, They must be certified as a fit and proper person to practise, have paid the accepted registration fee and they must hold a diploma, degree, membership, licence or certificate granted by a university or college or body empowered to confer such qualification. That is the council, Mr, Speaker, that is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the regulation of the paramedical profession in Barbados,

The acceptance of such profession within our system since 1975 when this council was first established, increased over time, In fact, if I can use a comparison because we have not done that type of empirical evaluation in Barbados, but in the United States it is believed that one in three Americans is being or has been treated by a holistic practitioner, We have not done that kind of evaluation here in Barbados but the reality is that from just talking to people it certainly would appear that large numbers of Barbadians are also opting for treatment from holistic practitioners and paramedical practitioners.

There are a number of both the front and back bench who have been treated by holistic practitioners and paramedical practitioners with a high degree of success. People will often tell you to see a chiropractor, see an acupuncturist, why don't you try so and so, he gave me some herbs, or she gave me some herbs and they work really well,

In Barbados, we have got to come to a point and we are coming to a point where the holistic practitioner

is co-existing with the orthodox practitioner and where the medical system is evolving in such a way that persons are opting for treatment by one or the other or by both in conjunction and having the modalities of treatments complementing one another,

Over a time, we have sought to add to the list of paramedical practitioners who legitimately practise in Barbados, 2,55 p,m,

Occupational therapy is one of the areas that already exists within the ambit of the law and today what the Ministry of Health and the Environment is attempting to do is to so expand the number of persons who are allowed to practise, who are registered as paramedical practitioners by expanding the list as now recognised by the law,

The exclusion so far of the categories which I am going to deal with in a minute have impacted on the community in several ways, First of all it means that there are persons whom the law in Barbados does not recognise as legitimate practitioners who can register but who have been trained in a particular field of paramedical science and who can legitimately practise outside of Barbados, It has therefore meant that members of the public who want to access the services of those persons cannot legitimately access them, It has meant that those persons who literally practise without registration in some instances would have done so without the cloak of legality,

Another consequence is that persons who are trained who have a service to offer could not legitimately earn revenue legally in the field in which they were trained because they could not register and be legally recognised in Barbados.

It has also meant by extension that there has been a limitation of the scope of health services which we offer here in Barbados, Perhaps the final consequence of the non-recognition of these paramedical professions, Mr, Speaker, is that persons who have legitimate insurance claims, particularly persons who are injured in motor vehicle accidents when they go to these practitioners and are treated, sometimes treated with tremendous success and very good results, because these persons have not been legitimately registered and recognised in Barbados, the consequence has been that some insurance companies, not all, have refused to accept medical reports coming from these practitioners,

As a result persons with legitimate claims have not been able to get the degree of compensation which they deserve because the medical report, which was a perfectly valid report, was not accepted by the insurance company

because the practitioner was not a person registered as a paramedic in Barbados because they did not fall within one of the accepted categories.

It is incumbent on the Ministry of Health and the Environment because we are charged with this responsibility, that we ensure that those persons who are legitimately trained and who fall within the ambit of the definition and guidelines of the criteria which I detailed earlier, and who have a service to offer Barbadians and where there is a need for their service, that the Ministry of Health and the Environment expand the parameters of the recognised paramedical professions to include other persons who legitimately practise outside of Barbados and who can help to complement our medical services here in Barbados.

It is against this background, Sir, that we bring before the Chamber today 13 new paramedical professions under this Bill for registration. They are, Sir, the Paramedical Professions of Dietetics.

This is the science of planning and regulating feeding according to nutritional needs and principles especially in the patient care services in hospitals and other health care institutions and facilities. This is of particular relevance to people who might be dieting who are seeking to make the transition from a diet where they eat meat to a vegetarian diet; where they might want information on how to have an adequate amount of protein by eating what kinds of foods; how to make sure that they are properly nourished and not overnourished or undernourished. Because many people do not recognise, Sir, that while in the rest of the Caribbean undernutrition is a very serious problem that in Barbados one of the challenges that we have is overnutrition. That people eat too much or eat too much of a particular type or eat foods that are not necessarily good for us; where we do not have as much grains as we should; where we eat too much protein and it is largely that kind of overnutrition problem that has led to the rise in the chronic diseases which we are seeing so much now in Barbados.

I have commented before that 70% of the Q.E.H. budget, I think it is as high as that, goes to treating the chronic diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, stroke, cancer, well that is not quite food related but some of it is related to nutrition, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. All of these are nutrition related and in fact if we are to adequately deal with our health problems we are going to have to deal with diet of our people, starting with the Minister, and the kind of lifestyles that we lead.

Many of us, and in politics it is very much so, spend a lot of time at our desk. You are working very hard. Everybody who has something in the community wants you

to come and people get very upset if you do not eat or drink or at least taste what it is they are serving and you can tend to put on weight if you do not make the time. You have to make the time and you can be so exhausted with the long hours you are working you do not necessarily make the time to go into the gym and to adequately exercise.

Nutrition is now going to be recognised and registered. This is the study of the chemistry of food and its relation to health and disease, the assessment of the nutritional value of food consumed by individuals and the planning and implementation of educational programmes designed to improve and maintain the nutritional status of the population.

Having pointed to this one, Sir, I should like to take this opportunity to inform the House that the Ministry of Health and Environment has developed a national nutrition policy which will shortly go before the Cabinet and which we want to make public. Because, we believe that if we are in fact going to target the chronic diseases and if we are going to be trying to promote the notion of healthy lifestyles which the newspapers and the media have finally caught onto, then we must do so against the background of a national nutrition policy that people can understand what they should eat, how they should eat and how food can be prepared. 3.05 p.m.

We must, as part of this policy, target all sectors of the community, particularly our young people and those groups whom we determine to be at risk. Young people in particular, Sir, because they are also a powerful lobby group in getting their parents to behave in a particular way. They are going to the supermarket with their parents. They tell you "Mummy, don't buy that" or "Daddy, don't buy that," or "the teacher said this or the teacher said that" and they often influence their parents into doing a particular thing or not doing a particular thing. We believe that if we can inculcate in them from very early the rudiments of healthy lifestyles then they are likely to capture the nucleus of what healthy lifestyles and healthy living is all about and it will grow with them as part of the way they live. Then, it is much easier to teach them and to guide them and train them in relation to certain lifestyle choices than it is to change the lifestyle approach of somebody at 40.

Cardiac Technology - This is the examination (invasive and non-invasive) under prescription of the human cardiovascular system for the purpose for diagnosis of disease or injury.

This would be related specifically to the heart. We have, in fact got now in Barbados, attached to

the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, cardiac technologists and this of course has to go as part of the new Unit of Invasive Cardiology and there is somebody else currently being trained in this particular speciality at this time.

Speech Language Pathology - The study of the aspects of functional or organic speech or language disorders.

Many of us certainly at primary school when we hear people stammering it tends to cause humour among young children and they tend to tease each other and so, but there are a number of speech language problems, people speaking with lisps, people not pronouncing certain words properly, people who have cleft palates and other physical ailments that impact on the way they speak, some of which can be cured and some of which are really grounded in the physical and might not be cured or treated as easily. But this is one of the new areas which we are going to be recognising.

Audiology - The study of hearing disorders through the identification and measurements of hearing function loss as well as the rehabilitation of persons with hearing impairments.

Very often, Mr. Speaker, hearing affects speech. Sometimes when you hear people speak and think they have a language problem or a problem communicating or a problem with a speech, analysis shows that they have a problem that is hearing related.

The Ministry of Health and the Environment has been working with the Ministry of Education and testing children in primary schools because we were finding that a large number of Barbadian children have hearing problems. We have had to do serious testing to recognise why it is this is so, what is the nature of the complaints and how these complaints can be treated. Because a person's ability to hear, impacts not only on their ability to learn, but their capacity to function socially and at every level in society and this therefore, is an important addition to the paramedical profession.

Chiropody or podiatry - The study and care of the foot including its normal structures, its diseases and their treatment.

Often we see people with cracks on their heels, people complain of athlete's foot, persons who are elderly tend to have a lot of difficulties with their feet, people with specific diseases like diabetes have serious problems with their feet and their toes, but the care of the feet, the toe nails, dealing with corns, dealing with various areas of the

foot that might be weak or showing that disease of a particular type, if you can deal with these things early or stop problems from developing particularly in relation to diabetics, you can often or sometimes save the loss of the toe, the loss of more than one digit, the loss of the foot. We have as many as 115-foot or lower limb amputations per year here in Barbados and that is a really high number. Therefore, I am hoping that now this service is going to be legitimately recognised and registered that a large number of Barbadians will avail themselves of this service and will not wait until they have some recognised foot disease. All of us should take care of our feet. They bear the weight of our bodies, they work very hard, they pound the cement for us particularly those of us who must do house to house. So, politicians, if nobody else, should look after their feet properly.

Though I introduced some levity, Mr. Speaker, this really is a very serious paramedical science and I think that we need to pay more attention as a people, to our feet.

Nuclear Medicine - The administration under prescription of Radiopharmaceuticals for the purpose of diagnosis or treating disease in the human body.

This is one of the areas of critically diagnostic skills that is recognised internationally and which we feel we should have here. It is an adjunct to certain types of diagnoses and treatments already used here in Barbados and will add significantly to the paramedical services which are offered.

Counselling Psychology - The study and treatment of maladaptive human behaviour, including emotional behaviour and the study and application of career and vocational assessment and adaptation.

I think this is one that everybody knows or understands and is more familiar with, so I would not give any great detail.

Educational Psychology - The application of psychology to education, especially to problems of teaching and learning.

Again, that is one that I think is well known. Psychology has now been practised here for some time and this is just various branches and specialisation within psychology.

Acupuncture - A technique of insertion of special needles into particular parts of the body for the treatment of disease, relief of pain or production of anaesthesia.

Acupuncture has been practised by the Chinese for many many centuries. There are persons who have been treated with acupuncture who swear to its therapeutic effect, I myself, have seen a person who was virtually paralyzed treated over time with acupuncture and to my amazement was able to walk and walk fairly well and strongly in a short space of time, So, I have seen this modality of treatment used with a high degree of success. It has been practised here in Barbados on and off, People have expressed an interest and practice in it, There was, many years ago a Barbadian medical practitioner who had migrated to Canada and had come back in the mid 80's in the hope of practising acupuncture in Barbados, And though at the time there was a demand for it, there was no general acceptance of it amongst practitioners of the day and paramedics and we were never able to get acupuncture onto the list of recognised paramedical professions, I am happy to say that we are now able to do so.

Orthoptics - The study or treatment of muscle imbalances of the eye, Squints and other movements of the eyes that people do not consider normal,

In fact, it can be very distracting sometimes to watch people who have squints or movements of the eye that you do not consider normal, but orthoptics is the specialty which deals in particular with that area, 3,15 p,m,

"Osteopathy - the diagnosis and manual treatment of many problems affecting the neuromusculoskeletal systems with main emphasis on the structural and mechanical problems. Treatment includes a variety of soft tissue 'massage type' techniques and repetitive stretching movement, Adjunctive physical procedures are also included,"

That explanation is sufficiently wide for people to appreciate what that particular area is all about,

"Reflexology - stimulation of the various reflex points of the foot as a means of balancing the systems of the body to improve their function and well-being,"

There are those persons and practitioners* who believe that many of our complaints can be treated by diagnosing and treating our feet, That the problems of the rest of the body all come back to that point of the body and reflexology is the science which is loosely based on that thinking which uses the feet as the centre of the focus for treatment,

"Chiropractic - the diagnosis and treatment of problems affecting the neuromusculo-skeletal systems, Treatment includes the manipulation and adjustment of the spine and other anatomical structures as well as

adjunctive physical procedures and diagnostic imaging,"

We have had in Barbados chiropractors practising for some time, There are people who believe in them, In fact, there are many doctors who after treating you for some time when you have a whiplash injury or various types of spinal injury and other bone injury will refer you to a chiropractor and say that there is nothing more they can do for you, see a chiropractor. People have gone and had some success,

Where are we going in the future? I have basically said where the legislation takes us, Perhaps I can indicate which areas our country recognises and where we are going in the future,

We now recognise medical laboratory technology, occupational therapy, ophthalmic dispensing, physiotherapy, clinical psychology, diagnostic radiography, therapeutic radiography and these have all been registered for some considerable time, It was in 1969 that we started working on this notion of development of paramedics in Barbados, Now we have today added 13 new professions or we hope by this Bill to add today 13 new professions to the list of paramedical professions recognised in Barbados, It is clear that the number of holistic practitioners who are practising in the Caribbean and the rest of the world and who are increasingly asking to be registered in Barbados that we are going to have to expand the field even further,

One of the areas that we are being pressed to recognise is iridology, That paramedical science where the practitioner has the skill to look into the eyes and diagnose what is the problem with the rest of the body.

The Council is now considering homeopathy, hypnotherapy, massage therapy, psychotherapy, holistic medicine and Chinese medicine which really involves several other sub-branches within that,

In each case, where new paramedical personnel have to be registered and where we have to add new branches, analyses must be made to ensure that the person satisfies the criteria established by the law since 1975, that the person should be able to speak English, that they must have certification or qualification which is from a recognised institution itself qualified to give that certificate or other form of recognition.

In broadening the list of paramedical professions, the Council and the Ministry will ensure that we not only give Barbadians access to the skills and services available

to them worldwide by people who want to practise here, some of whom are Barbadians trained in these professions but that we allow a sufficiently wide choice in Barbados that people can earn a living from these professions legitimately, that people who have had difficulty in the past with medical reports and insurance companies that we can now resolve that particular problem and that people can have access or where there is a demand or need for these skills and services, that members of the public seeking to treat various ailments can have access to these skills.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, the members of the parliamentary Opposition are not at all in disagreement with the attempt to broaden the paramedical profession by the amendment of this particular Bill. I, however, would caution that there must be some restraint with regard to broadening the net so as not to willy-nilly allow all and every type of paramedical profession to exist in Barbados.

The Minister need not have gone through the entire process since it is part of the record in terms of identifying the Schedule. However, I am not in any way disputing what is contained in the brief.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It was part of the record as tabled by the Bill itself. I was not quite sure why the Minister needed to do that. My concern has really to do with the overall broad policy of Government's approach to the development of health in Barbados.

Clearly, over the last couple of years we have seen complete deterioration in the general delivery of health care to Barbadians. Now, Mr. Speaker, I recognise that in the modern health environment that people are becoming more and more concerned how they treat disease.

Many years before several Barbadians died, suffered, went through life encountering difficulties when they need not have. I am glad to see that there is a consciousness where people are now not suffering like they used to many years ago where when they had a particular disease they left it alone and did not treat it with any specific treatment. 3.25 p.m.

These professions that are emerging will have the impact of assisting in treating patients with different types of diseases, offering alternatives and so forth.

I am very concerned that the Ministry of Health is seeking to put in place a broader net to accommodate more

professional people coming into the delivery of health care yet the entire health delivery is sliding and going down and down in the country. Something has to be wrong. I do not know if it is because of the Government's disjointed policy.

We have a scenario in Barbados where the hospital is in shambles. You cannot open an eye clinic. You shut down the St. Joseph Hospital. There is total confusion at the mad house. You broaden the net. There is no talk about delivering these areas to the Barbadian public. Not a single word how I would be able to go, whether it is my choice to go to a person practising acupuncture if I have a particular difficulty and I cannot get my hand bent up here, that he could push me here and fix my hand.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: No discussion whatsoever about how we are going to get assistance to the Barbadian person who wants to have access to these areas. There was no discussion, just a nice broad opening. Nowhere has the Minister said to the Barbadian people that they have now available to them at the cost of the State, or whatever, that they can now go and be diagnosed, assisted and treated in these kinds of matters by a paramedic dealing with nutrition and the whole list of areas the Minister identified.

Now, I have to relate it to cost and the Minister of Health who refused to debate Health in this House of Assembly during the Estimates for two consecutive years, continues to spend an enormous amount of money in the Ministry of Health, yet the Minister knows that at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and some other institutions there is a critical shortage of jobs in this country. In many hospital wards there is no toilet paper, no bed sheets, no linens, nothing at all available.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is trying to mislead the House. The Honourable Member will be aware from the Estimates that since this Government came to office in 1994 that the vote to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been increased by about \$23 million so that we have not cut any vote or cut their vote or done anything which would result in a shortage of supplies. The Government has provided the resources to ensure that they have adequate supplies.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I never said anything about cutting any vote. I recognise they have received more money and have done significantly less with a lot more money. That is true. The Minister herself said publicly that she does not even know where the money goes, that it disappears. We are talking about the delivery of health care to Barbadians.

I asked on the Floor of this House a Parliamentary Question about whether any provision was being made for the increase of doctors at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is Parliamentary Question No. 28.

"To ask the Minister of Health and the Environment: Will the Minister state what plans, if any, Government has for the creation of additional posts at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to accommodate an increase in the number of interns during the fiscal year 1996/97?"

The question was asked since April 30, 1996, over a year ago, not a single reply. Yet the Minister, who has additional money in the Ministry of Health, now cannot find enough places to place the doctors. Another Minister comes into the House of Assembly, misleads the entire House of Assembly...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. The Honourable Member you are asked to withdraw that, please. That is not very parliamentary.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: What did I say though? I said another Minister? Let me be specific, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. You did say another Minister misled the House. I ask you to withdraw that, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Let me put it precisely how I want to put it.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you will withdraw first.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Yes. I will withdraw and start from scratch. The Minister of Education during a recent debate in this House indicated that the University of the West Indies placed a cap on the number of persons who are being accepted...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is going against a tradition in this House by referring to comments which have been made by an Honourable Member who is not here to defend herself. Even though he has not completed what he wanted to say, if one might look at the tenor of what he said earlier, it is fairly obvious that he is about to say something which would have to be substantiated by that Honourable Member. It is really out of order for him to proceed along those lines, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, this is amazing because he does not know what I was going to say but he has risen on a point of order. It is amazing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You cannot even talk in here now.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear. We are talking about the delivery of health care and there must be a policy and a plan. We are bringing a broad net to this Parliament today to include in the paramedical profession...

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I have no problem with that but I am speaking about health care in general. This is an amendment, fine. This will facilitate some of the difficulties in the industry. This will allow some people to have a few jobs.

I do not know if any Barbadians can be able to access any of these particular jobs. I do not know if they are trained. To link the point I do not know if you do not have any money to train additional doctors, how are you going to find money to train Barbadians to deal in these specific areas? You will bring in a wash of overseas nationals or foreigners into the Barbadian system...

Hon. Miss H.E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. A point of order. The Honourable Member, please. Take your seat, please.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I do not believe it is totally deliberate. I think it is a result of his own personal confusion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. Could you make your point of order, please?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Nowhere during the course of my comments did I indicate that the Ministry had started any training programme in these areas. There are established training programmes outside of Barbados which the Honourable Member well knows exist. The Ministry is not finding money to train these people so it is to mislead the House and by extension the public out of the abundance of his own confusion...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, the point I was making relates to money available to the Ministry

of Health, The Minister of Education said in this Parliament recently that the University of the West Indies,,

Aside,

Mr, J, O, TUDOR: I would have to send and ask for the record,

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us proceed orderly, please,

Mr, J, O, TUDOR: Hie Minister said clearly and we understood what the Minister said on that side that the University had put on a cap and as a result the Queen Elizabeth Hospital could not now accept more than 10 interns coming out,

Hon, Miss H, E, THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir, That information misleads the House and I want to set the record straight, This is 1997,

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

I was about to refer the Honourable Member for St, Michael East to Standing Orders 28(4) and also 28(11), I hope that you are not now attempting to give an explanation that refers to the point that was made by the Honourable Member.

Clearly Standing Order No, 28(4) says:-

"It shall be out of order to reflect on any vote of the House or attempt to reconsider any specific matter upon which the House has come to a conclusion during the current session except upon a substantive motion for rescission,"

Standing Order 28(11) says:

"No Member may allude to any debate of the same session upon a question or bill not being then under discussion, except by indulgence of the House, for personal explanation,"¹¹

I will suggest you proceed and as you make your reference to any previous comments that you do not bring it into the debate, I will allow you, of course, if you make a reference to make a point. Could you proceed, please? 3,35 p.m.

Mr, J, O, TUDOR: Mr, Speaker, I am really speaking in relation to the public statement that was issued recently by the Minister of Education,

Mr, SPEAKER: You did not exactly say that.

Mr, J, O, TUDOR: I am now putting it in a proper perspective, It stands to reason that there is total confusion on die side of the Government, Clearly something is wrong, They would have taken this Parliament and abused Parliament by taking a position that they are on the one hand promoting the interest of health care in Barbados by providing free education, by making all kinds of interns available to the country, yet we can hear that in 1997, all of a sudden that you have to pay,

Asides.

Mr, J, O, TUDOR: That is right, that the Cabinet of Barbados imposed a cap and that it was not the University of the West Indies that did it and all kinds of mixed up confusion as far as I am concerned. Then today, you returned telling me that you are going to broaden the net to include categories to provide more health care to Barbadians, It is the most set of foolishness that I have ever heard, This is bordering on being disgraceful, On one hand they gave the impression that they are doing all this kind of thing for Barbados and then not one single Barbadian does not even know if you have somebody that can perform acupuncture in Barbados,

Asides,

Mr, J, O, TUDOR: You do not know, it is really disgraceful and we have a Minister who is going to laugh and get to the point and talk about hypnosis and practising witchcraft and putting people to sleep,

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please,

Mr, J. O, TUDOR: Mr, Speaker, I really would like to implore the Minister to stop the jumping all over the place in terms of health delivery in this country, I feel that there is a serious problem in Barbados, I am not putting any blame on this particular Minister or who ever, there is a genuine problem in Barbados with the delivery of healthcare, Something is fundamentally wrong, I visit all of the institutions. I went to the Geriatric Hospital, the Psychiatric Hospital, Q.E.H., I have gone to all of them and every single body is crying out that the conditions have deteriorated, It is in very bad state and we cannot just come in here and think that we are doing any fancy job and say that you are broadening any net like you have done anything that is glorifying, Reading it like a, b, c.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Minister is making it as if it is part of a big decision. This is something that has been going on for some time, Many of the professions that are here, we have no difficulty with it, This is an

ongoing negotiation. It is fine that it has come to Parliament but I am taking the opportunity to deal with the fact that there is no health policy in Barbados that is functioning in the interest of Barbadian people and we cannot go on with a Minister who has received enormous amount of increases and yet the delivery of health care in this country has gone down and down where all kinds of strange deaths are taking place at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and not a word from the Minister. Not a word as far as that is concerned. We come in here with all kinds of fancy Bills trying to broaden the net. We do not even know if this is going to reach the Barbadian public.

Mr. Speaker, I really support this Bill. This Bill is an amendment and it broadens the net but it does nothing for the delivery of health care in this country. The Government has, as a matter of urgency, to start paying some attention to the delivery of health care in Barbados. This charade has to stop. It really has to stop.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief in this matter. I am very pleased to support this Bill which expands the categories of persons in Barbados who can now provide medical care. It is something that I really wanted to see come about for some time now, it is really overdue. I do not share the view of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East that these categories of persons can compare to witch doctors and those sorts of people. I think these people have played, over the years, a very important role in the delivery of health care in Barbados. I believe that the two types of medicine complements each other, the orthodox medicine and the alternative medicine and incidentally, it is not my view that those people who now practise holistic medicine are the alternate practitioners because they were around from the years before Christ and in the very early village days and in fact those people we know as the orthodox doctors, are in fact, in my view, the alternative practitioners.

I believe that a lot of the standoff and non-recognition of these holistic practitioners have come about because unfortunately the so-called orthodox practitioners have been for too long antagonistic. I believe that doctors as we know them over the years have shown too much antagonism towards these categories of persons and I am pleased to see that at long last these persons have been recognised.

I know of many cases, of which I am one, of persons who have attended various categories of these persons listed here and have gone into a room in immense pain and

walked out with no pain whatsoever and without having to take any antibiotics or anything of the sort or without having to take any medication or anaesthetic and left the room without any sort of pain whatsoever. I know of cases like that because I was one of those cases. So I have personally benefitted.

I am pleased with the list, the Minister of Health has assured us that we will shortly have the Iridologist on board. I will also mention another category perhaps not known to many, the Kinesiologist which combines techniques of Reflexology, Shiatshu *inter alia* and these people have worked very well in the field of health. All these are fields out there that have produced results and I want to see those persons without any delay added to the list. 3.45 p.m.

It is well known that medication which can play a role, medicines, antibiotics and the like cure the problem at hand but create many other problems as they are curing the particular problem. They solve or cure "A" and then they cause "B" or "C" to come into existence.

It is well known also that endorphins which are in the body and which can be stimulated by reflexologists and kinesiologists and so on are five times more powerful than morphine and that is why I recognise the important role that these categories of persons play in Barbados. I believe now it would be safe to say, and the Minister can shed some light on this, that when persons now go to these persons they would be able to recover on their insurance because I know of a case where a lady had a problem with sciatica and she was attending a gentleman whose name really I believe I should call. The man is worthy of mention. His name is Eric Hunte from St. Stephens Hill. He is worthy of mention. I know a lady who was attending him with her problems, immense pain and after two or three treatments, because she had to get a series of treatments she could not afford to put out in circumstances where she was not going to recover under an insurance and she had to withdraw getting treatment from Dr. Hunte, I call him Dr. Hunte, and instead resort to the orthodox practitioner, spend loads and loads of money, took about 17 or 18 treatments to come back on track. She was benefitting tremendously, the pain was going away but she could not continue the payments. She was not going to get them back under her insurance. Today he is still not recognised in here and that is why I put in a plea for him. He is a kinesiologist. I am hoping that not only would these persons be able to issue medical reports but that persons who attend these people would in fact be able to recover the money paid under the medical insurance claims.

I will, Mr. Speaker, monitor this situation very closely because I have a very strong liking for the area and I

have a very keen interest. I fully support the Bill in the expectation that in the not too distant future the category of persons listed here would in fact be expanded. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to be too long in this particular debate but I would have been neglecting my constituents, Sir, if I did not get involved in this particular debate. I want to find out from the Minister, Mr. Speaker, if the policy at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as it relates to the life-support machine, if it has changed because, Sir, a couple weeks ago, Sir, I attended a funeral where someone was taken off a life-support machine without the permission of the parents and I am very angry about that, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: One of my constituents was taken off life-support without the permission of the parents and I want to know if the policy in Barbados has changed because I think that parent should be seeking legal advice. It is even more hurtful that he was a very young boy, got involved in an accident through no fault of his own, was struck by a vehicle, in hospital, parents call the hospital to be told that he was taken off the life-support machine without the permission of the parents I am saying that a matter like this cannot continue in this country anymore because when it is a child of the rich there is a different approach because even when the parents want them taken off, there are people begging to keep them on. As soon as you are a poor child you are interfering with some bed at the hospital or something like that and I am saying that this foolishness must stop. Every Tuesday I am in here complaining about the wrongs that are happening to poor people and every day it is continuing. I am asking for your support in this matter, Sir, because poor people must feel that they have a right to be protected in this country. You think I am joking about this matter? We have a teacher man today in St. Lucy and it hurts. It is really hurting him because he was very close to his son and the Honourable Member for St. James North knows what I speak of because they were at school together and they were very close. I believe he actually bowled some balls at him already that he could not play at either.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that in a matter like this I am calling on your support and I am saying that every Member on the Floor of the House should express disgust on a matter like this. I am saying that poor people in this country must feel that they are entitled to the same benefits as anybody else. They have helped to build the foreign reserves in this country and the impression given in this country is that foreign reserves are only for a few. I am saying it is time for this nonsense to stop and whoever

made the decision without the parents, some compensation must be afforded to the parents.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know the Honourable Attorney General would do his best. It is true it is not his Ministry but I know he would give the right advice. I am dealing on fair ground so I hope, Sir, that this matter would not be repeated again. Today it might be my constituent, tomorrow it might be yours. But you are assured, Sir, that whenever it happens to mine I will be heard on the roof top and when it happens to yours I will protect you too, Sir. Thank you very much. 3.55 p.m.

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

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation before us. Important not in the sense that it is heart-breaking but that it is a continuation of that long list of Acts that we have passed in Parliament, Sir, for the improvement and development of health care in Barbados.

Those are steps, Sir, which have been taken in order to improve the quality of life in Barbados to such an extent that I am sure the Acting Prime Minister will agree with me if he did not say words to that effect recently.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am referring to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, Sir.

Barbados, up to 1994, Sir, was among the top three developing countries in the world and among the top 25 countries in the world including both developing and industrial countries. And that is in no small measure due to the steps and measures that have been taken down through the years in order to improve and maintain the status of health of the people* of Barbados and to improve upon that status.

Sir, we are talking about some 12 different paramedical professions that are being brought on board here, Sir, within the framework of the Paramedical Professions Act and included among these are the nutritionists and dieticians.

A question was raised about the training of these persons and the Minister pointed out that there is nothing in here about the training, but she herself will recognise, Sir, that way back in 1975, the training institution was set up for the training of what we called the allied health professions.

But the institution was there and the framework for expansion in that training is there, Indeed, Sir, I recall,,

Asides,

Rt, Hon, L, E, SANDIFORD; I am not saying I had something to do with it,

All I am saying, Sir, is that as far as the training in dietetics is concerned, I recall among the first national development scholarships that were awarded, one was in the area of dietetics and a young lady was actually selected by the National Scholarships Committee and I believe went off to Andrews University to study the discipline of dietetics,

I would expect, Sir, that since then others would have been chosen, I am simply making the point that if we are to maintain and improve upon the health status of Barbadians, we need to take these incremental steps in order to ensure that the best possible treatment at different levels is available to Barbadians and where it is not available in Barbados, that the resources would have to be found out of a growing economy in order to make the treatment available, Because without sound health, Sir, we would not be able to achieve anything to life, I think we have to have a progressive approach to these matters, I took the trouble to research the words that were spoken when the Paramedical Professions Bill, the one that is being amended was introduced and I would like to pay a tribute, I do not think many tributes have been paid to him in this Honourable House, to a former member, Dr, Rameses Caddie for the work that he did in this particular area,

I think that he himself, Sir, introduced this Bill very briefly but did refer to the fact that there are some strange attitudes towards some of the areas referred to and some of the areas that we being brought under this piece of legislation,

I think when it comes to health, Sir, we have to be very serious about these issues and the Member for St, Lucy raised a matter relating to life-support, indicating that one of his constituents was taken off life-support systems, I believe, Sir, that is a matter on which the Minister of Health should make an immediate statement or correction, get the information from wherever it is available, tell us that it is true or it is not true or what is the position because it is a very serious, serious statement, Sir, and a serious charge, both in terms of the practice of health care as well as in terms of what she refers to as the "modalities" that operate in these particular areas,

Aside.

Rt, Hon, L, E, SANDIFORD; All I am saying, Sir, is that if we are taking our responsibilities seriously, it is a matter that calls for the highest consideration and the most urgent consideration by those who are responsible to this House for health and medical services in Barbados,

And, I would like to express, Sir, my own comments in relation to other aspects of this Bill that is before us, One of the reputable publications in Barbados sometime ago - I need not say what that publication was but for purposes of transparency let me refer to the *Constituent* - I believe some time last year referred to an eye care facility at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 4,05 p,m,

Aside,

Rt, Hon, L, E, SANDIFORD; Sir, it pains me that a facility that was targetted as one of the major problems facing health care in Barbados in relation to sight, the care of the eyes, that we can have a facility and we can afford not to open that facility after the investment of time, energy, funds and the goodwill of civic minded persons, that that is not yet open and available to Barbadians and people of the Caribbean for the purposes for which it was designed, Yet we are coming in this piece of legislation before us,, Let me see, there is a category in here - orthoptics - the study and treatment of muscle imbalances of the eye and in brackets beside it "squint",

Sir, we have this allied health area and we are talking about that and are going to make that now an established profession under existing legislation and yet the facility which is to treat with the overall eye care, where no doubt the ophthalmologists and others would operate, that that remains there unused, brand new. I think that the Minister must give an explanation to this Parliament and to the people of Barbados in the discharge of her responsibilities.

Aside,

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD; Sir, I am wondering why the Minister for the benefit of her colleague Minister, the Honourable Member for St, Andrew, did not include any of the areas, the allied professions that would deal with the problems relating to the scabs and so on, I thought for his benefit - I did not interfere with him so he should not interfere with me, I thought I would have seen one of those allied professions in here but I do not see it, The Minister made no reference to any intention to improve that in the immediate future.

So, Sir, this is a piece of legislation that we welcome, It is a welcome development but it still does not answer the question relating to the remaining major problems in the delivery of health care at all levels, both at the

main level and at the allied level, It does not answer the question that remains outstanding and which people in Barbados want to hear about and to receive information so that we can be assured that those areas that have brought us to the position where up to 1994 Barbados was among the 3 top developing countries in the world and among the top 25 countries in the world that we can maintain and improve upon that particular position,

Health is very crucial to that area and the Minister must make the necessary account.

Thank you.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, again an apparent innocent piece of legislation seems to have more far-reaching implications than previously discussed. I would like to make a complaint that I was hoping that in this debate I could have used the population census based on 1990 to substantiate my position in relation to the data there contained on health, hearing and other physical disorders among the population of Barbados. There is no copy of the population census in this Chamber. This is the third time that I have asked for a copy and there is not one copy of the population census data and it happens to be the major area of reference for any discussion relating to Barbados because it is the only full survey of the population which includes all kinds of data on income, education, religion, whatever. It is contained in the census and it has to be a point of departure. It was never laid.

Sir, I just wish to suggest that the amendments have been put forward with the intention of the population on the whole having access to insurance claims and that for the first time, given that these paramedic professions will be part of the Act and will be recognised that one will be able to claim for insurance purposes.

In fact, when we look at the 13 professions they relate to dietetics, nutrition, issues which affect the low income levels of the population more so than any other.
4.15 p.m.

We see the study on the care of the foot and we know that different kinds of jobs entail standing or greater use of the feet than others. Again one can see that within the lower income categories, within the agricultural sector, the industrial sector and the like that people would tend to suffer more from problems relating to the feet than say areas of professions where there are airconditioned offices on a daily basis and you do your work.

While I understand the apparent hidden agenda of ensuring that expenditure for these kinds of paramedic visits that the visitor would be able to access funding

through the insurance, there is an even greater need here, that is, for the legislation to be so written that the firms or the various employers are able now for the first time to put claims or access to insurance claims into their legislation or acts for the help of the employees. One is hoping that the low income earners are now more capable of accessing these kinds of services as a result of these professions being put into the Act for health insurance purposes so that the individuals themselves do not necessarily have to have health insurance, the employer, in fact, will now have and be able to include a wide spectrum of professional services for the workers. Let us be honest again.

Low income earners earning just \$1 000 a month are hardly going to be in a position to have overall insurance plans so that the greater emphasis here should be on the employers having greater access to insurance policies that guarantee that the low income workers would still find these kinds of services available which is, perhaps, the greatest benefit this legislation will provide for the wider population of Barbados.

Again, we speak of representing low income people and the poor and still when we come to construct our arguments to defend why we are bringing certain pieces of legislation to the Barbadian population we justify it more at the upper end of the scale. We justify it by way of insurance policies, middle income people and upper income people being able to make claims without really saying that is, in fact, really the point, that several of these medical professions will cater to the greater needs of the low income groupings in Barbados than really even in the middle because I am saying that spinal disorders, feet disorders and these kinds of diseases will more attend to the lower income people because of the nature of jobs and the overall kinds of activities which they find themselves in.

There is another area as well where there can be substantial benefit and that is for the sporting community in Barbados. There are several young players, football, basketball and the others who, in fact, suffer considerable pain, especially of the feet and of their backs, and they find it extremely difficult to find remedial medicine or approaches which they are able to afford.

One is again here asking whether or not we cannot establish perhaps a wider body to cater to the needs of these individuals who take their young bodies, put them into forms of activity like soccer, basketball, cricket and the like, and we have several instances of it in Barbados, but then find it very difficult for the traditional approaches to medicine to find solutions to their problems.

We have several fast bowlers who suffer with back problems. We have several soccer players who suffer

with their knees and the like. Here it is again that possibly this legislation, because it actually addresses an area that to those sportsmen it is far more appropriate for finding solutions to the ailments which they suffer than the more traditional medicines. Therefore, again in a very simple way the sporting community of Barbados may very well find that this amendment to this legislation is going to be extremely meaningful to them because of the kind of ailments which they suffer in the various sports. What we are asking here is, now that we have included these paramedic professions, can we not now find a structure that permits these individuals who in many instances work - a lot of them may be unemployed as well - for low incomes to be able to give them an opportunity to use the financial resources which will be necessary for them to access?

I am saying now that you have made these paramedic professions part of the Act, that there must be some formal system through which they can be channelled to ease the financial burden for these individuals. I am not yet clear because it is only during the course of the debate I thought about how it can be done but, certainly, now that the professions are part of the Act, there may now be a way for us to find means to assist these sportsmen through some formalised structure.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. Normally I would not want to interrupt the Honourable Member or to blunt the thrust of his argument. He did say that he had not thought this out that it occurred to him during the course of the debate. The reality is that there is a structure for the provision of these services within the polyclinics, at the hospital and the other health institutions. That is where lower income earners in Barbados tend to go. These services are provided within the public health setting for low income people free of cost.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The thing about the intervention is that there has been considerable criticism of the delivery of health services in Barbados. Those of us who are, in fact, aware would know that to even go that route is to be going a very lonely, delayed route. I have experience with that even within the constituency where we have recently raised funds for an individual who is suffering from a particular ailment but would require almost a year to be seen at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital so that funds are now being raised to give this individual an opportunity to go to Bay View.

I am saying that while in theory it might be available, I am saying that in reality...

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: That is the purpose of the debate. The purpose of the debate is to recognise that the

amendment to the Act seems to be able to go much further than at first anticipated. While you are saying that in the opening comments, I never heard any reference to health hazards on the jobs and to the relationship between the structure of jobs in Barbados and low income people and the fact that low income people do not immediately have access to these kinds of services.

All I am saying is that I am making a contribution in the debate that is suggesting that you have an opportunity where you can now begin to tie in the needs of the low income earners in Barbados with greater access to these kinds of services that can be offered. I am suggesting again that there is an even greater than anticipated benefit that one can get from the amendments to the Act here. 4.25 p.m.

Now, having said that, however it does seem to me as though introducing these kinds of professions into the Act will on a broader scale require greater administrative work. We now have thirteen different paramedic professions which we are going to introduce as acceptable practices that one can be able to recover any funds spent by way of insurance. Again the insurance companies in Barbados will now have to look at this Act from the point of view of what it would require of them in terms of greater organisation of the work load, in terms of greater organisation of the capacity for people to access these funds.

I am saying that these professions are not now part of accepted practices but now that they have become so, it must have implications for the insurance companies and what they can do in terms of amending their policies. It will have implications for the policies because I cannot see how one is going to bring these professions into the Act without implications for premiums and the like.

If your are saying that you can now make a visit to the nutritionist and it can automatically entail a claim from an insurance company, I am saying that when the insurance companies recognise the extent to which a visit to a nutritionist can now have implications for them, it can then have implications for the overall policy of the insurance company.

The whole issue of acupuncture, reflexology and things relating to your feet, as I said before, I cannot see how the inclusion of these professions into the Act cannot have real implications for the insurance companies in terms of policies which they formulate and ultimately in terms of the premiums which they will have to charge.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course, it is simple common sense.

If indeed there is an abundance of obesity across the Barbadian population and now for the first time a middle income individual is in a position where she or he can go on a monthly basis to a nutritionist and be able to claim part of the expenditure to the nutritionist, then it must have implications for the insurance business. I cannot see how it will not.

The whole question of reflexology, I cannot see how it cannot have implications. All I am saying is that the amendment to the Act may in fact have wider implications than we at first seem to be suggesting. The other area, of course, is the overall Government policy as it relates to the claim of the \$1 800 that you are still able to claim for medical purposes.

Again, if one detects that the inclusion of these wider professional services are more widespread than we think across the working population in particular, then you may have to reconsider the limit of the medical allowance which I think now stands at \$1 800 per year. If you are going to be putting these professions in place, then you can expect that they will be utilised and if they are going to be utilised at the level which we anticipate, then it must have implications for the capacity or the ability of workers to make visits which they are sure will be in some way subsidised by Government by way of some tax deduction.

Again, the introduction of the paramedical profession not only affects the supply of medical services in Barbados but it can also have implication for the demand of medical services that is, if I know for a fact that these professions are now part of the accepted list then I certainly will be far more inclined to now put a nutritionist on my overall list of persons who I am visiting on a regular basis. If I know for a fact that a reflexologist and the other categories of paramedical professions are on the accepted list then, I too will be far more inclined. If we were to include the profession that takes care of the scalp and hair and the like then certainly females are going to be far more inclined to demand these services. As a consequence, I am saying that we can establish a monthly visit knowing fully well that we can make a claim for deduction at the insurance company, then certainly the demand for these services will also be stepped up.

In short, I am suggesting again, (1) that there is substantial evidence contained in the population census data that persons who would be affected by spinal disorder and disorder of the leg reside more in the lower and middle income categories and as a consequence that we can anticipate some increased demands for these services; (2) since now that we are sure that they will be the capacity or the ability to reclaim from the insurance then this Act will have wider implications than we are thinking for the insurance companies.

I am also suggesting a third point, that since we know there will be increased demand for these services that Government will have to look immediately at adjusting the \$1 800 in medical allowance because it does not make sense to amend this Act without anticipating increased demand for the services. In fact, if you were to allow the supply of these services to come on stream, accepted as part of the legal apparatus then you must anticipate, by extension that there will be increased demand for these services.

You cannot increase the supply by way of legitimising these Acts and not expect that people would increase their demand for these services. In short I am saying to you that there are several other implications which you have to look at in relation to this apparently innocent amendment.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It is not a question of the only person, it is a question of being able to introduce the issues into the debate. I am saying that you had an opportunity in the opening preamble to introduce these issues rather than constantly being sidetracked by certain individuals on the basis of pure political issues. You ought to be more thorough in terms of your presentation and more widespread in terms of the issues that can be affected by the Act. In short, you have an even greater contribution to make than you are making in this particular debate.

Again, for the second time, an innocent piece of legislation is left wanting because it has more far-reaching implications than the Minister has given to the amendment.

Thank you.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There are times when a debate gets sidetracked into areas which are irrelevant and the debate attracts some listenership because of the vocabulary that is used to make certain contributions. First of all to route this debate in class consideration and secondly to locate it in the area of the economics of supply and demand is really to stretch a very simple piece of legislation to a point where we are in realm of speculation and guess work rather than understanding the practical application of the legislation. The lawyers in this Chamber will be able to explain quite simply to all in here and all outside...

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the acting Prime Minister is misleading the House by suggesting that to see this debate in the context of the wider implications of

it, is rubbish. I am suggesting that even for the Ministry of Health to have come up with the 3 paramedic professional areas that they should have been some criteria used to determine these 13 categories. A cosmetic analysis would have been necessary.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not disagree with the point that there should be criteria used to determine which types of professions get in the Schedule or not. I am not talking about that, I am talking about all this big implications and administrative inconvenience that it will put on insurance companies. Quite simply, if people would go to the Parent Act, they will see in the Parent Act in the First Schedule there are nine types of like professions mentioned, chiropractic, lab technologist, occupational therapy, optometry, ophthalm[^] Dispensing, physiotherapy, clinical psychology, diagnostic radiography and therapeutic radiography. All this Bill today is doing is adding to a list of paramedics recognised by,

(a) the Paramedics Council, and

(b) the Ministry of Health.

4.35 p.m.

What has happened, Mr. Speaker, is that over the years there have been persons allowed to practice as paramedics in Barbados in various fields because after perusal of their qualifications the paramedical council determines that they should be eligible to get on the register.

The Registrar publishes a list of these professionals every year. There are 2 consequences of registration however. First of all when these paramedics who have been practising but not provided for in the Schedule have given certificates,

- (1) the National Insurance Department would not honour the authenticity of that certificate for the purposes of certifying sick leave.
- (2) where a person has been involved in an accident and has gone to a chiropractor and had 10 treatments and then adds on to his special damage claim all the other things, it came to about \$300 that he paid to "x" the chiropractor, the insurance company refused to recognise the qualification saying it is not in the Act and they will not pay the claim.

So the person that the Honourable Member referred to, injured in the bus accident or wherever who had spent \$300 going to a chiropractor or somebody and then could not claim it back from the insurance company because they would not recognise them, we are trying to put all these

things on a proper basis so that when these paramedics give certificates or even issue prescriptions that they would have the same kind of force as if they had been done by a medical practitioner.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: This will have the effect of giving recognition to a number of professionals for a long time.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition has done a lot of personal injury matters. He will know that physiotherapists are recognised. If as a consequence of an accident you have to have physiotherapy, the bill for treatment is usually paid by the insurance company after such liability but it is not so with some of the others. One of the things that we are trying to do, certainly in the area of chiropractics, is to ensure that those professions are recognised.

I am with the Honourable Minister of Health and the Honourable Minister responsible for Civil Aviation on this one. I believe very strongly in the chiropractor, personal experience. There are times when I have not been able to come into this House properly because of my back. The only thing that will get me right is 3 visits to the chiropractor. No amount of tablets, Feldene and all these funny things will work like the chiropractor. I can tell you West Indies cricketers who have benefitted, Greenidge, Marshall, to my certain knowledge. Marshall had a problem with his hip and it is only a chiropractor that straightened him out.

I do not think that any of these who are being recognised in the legislation today, Sir, falls into the category of voodoo man or obeah man. We are dealing with other types of professions. It is true that the herbs and the grasses, bush teas and so on were popular but they still are popular. If anybody comes by my house in September they can get the world of cerasee from me, I have it growing wild above my house and now the rains have come you are going to see it in about 2 or 3 weeks time. I drink a bit of cerasee bush tea when I have it once a week. Hot orange peel tea is great for gas. Lemon grass shows the world where to pass. Not so much pear, sour sop leaves. I believe in those things.

I was only concerned to say it is important. I do not know if the Minister of Health in her opening made the point, Sir, but from time to time the Ministry of Health receives recommendations from the paramedical council as to which professions should

be given statutory recognition. All of these have been through that process. Dr. Sealy who is the Chairman of the Paramedical Council - I know earlier this year when we were dealing with this legislation at a meeting with the Ministry of Health and we had all of the equivalent English legislation. England has a whole big bill on osteopathy. We just referred to it in the Schedule. That is our style because we are following the format of the parent legislation but these professions are recognised and in Britain most of them are governed by separate individual legislation. We have not yet reached there so we have amalgamated them all in here, Sir.

I think it is a useful piece of legislation. It should assist the practitioners and it will assist a number of persons in their legitimate claims for recognition for the treatment down the road. Many, many persons I know have been denied their claim. I am talking about ordinary people who get involved in accidents, whiplash. The consequence of whiplash is that you have soft tissue issue in the cervical spine. No treatment for it other than massage and manipulation, analgesics. You may go to a chiropractor or a physiotherapist.

Sir, I cannot answer that one. The Minister of Health will have to answer why the masseuse is not in here, Sir. In some countries an advertisement for a masseuse has implications similar to those for an escort. So with those few words I just want to make clear the purpose and intent of the legislation and I have great pleasure in supporting it and commending it to Honourable Members for their approval.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief but I wanted to clarify a point which I thought was very significant and arises out of what the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said. I think he was missing the gravamen of the point which was being made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Now, settling insurance claims may be one issue and in that respect, I am talking about claims arising out of negligence. In that respect perhaps the question could be asked whether there are going to be implications there from the perspective of how many alternative methods could any one individual use to solve a medical problem. I will give you an example. On Sunday evening I happened to be at home and it is the first Sunday evening I have been at home for a long time and I saw a programme by David Suzuki on back pain. 4.45 p.m.

That programme highlighted perhaps seven different techniques of dealing with back pain. Reflexology,

acupuncture, surgery and they went through all of them, and there are some people who may find one technique does not work and another technique may work. I think you have answered that question on insurance companies that unless some bar or limit is placed they would have to settle those claims.

What the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is talking about is another matter which relates to group health policy. What he is saying is that if you widen the scope of medical services which are legitimately available to a person in seeking to heal a malady of one form or another that they may be suffering, what are the implications in terms of group health policy? The premiums, will they increase? Because you are making available to an individual now a much wider variety of alternatives to the basic ones, which may exist under the existing legislation or under the existing policy. So, I think what the Honourable Member is trying to say is that if you are going to provide opportunities for alternative medicine to be pursued, you have to be conscious of the impact of it in relation to group health policy. You have to be conscious of it in relation to the tax benefit which is given to citizens to reclaim medical expenses. So, there are now going to be a number of other implications which are going to flow from this legislation and I think he is merely asking the Minister or the Government as a whole, whether they have addressed their minds to the other implications which may arise in circumstances such as this.

I am certain there may be many other countries in the world. Would the Honourable Member visit a shiatsu, as well as a reflexologist, as well as an acupuncturist, as well as a chiropodist, I do not know. In other words, this now provides an opportunity for one individual to try a variety of techniques, some of them non-traditional, homeopathy, etc.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the first point is that, as the Leader of the Opposition has now put the point made by the Honourable Member of St. Michael North West, and if he will understand the point he will concede that it was not that well expressed when he did.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He called you over to explain. Secondly, Sir, I understand the point about shopping from paramedic to paramedic, but the Honourable Leader of the Opposition will remember that those kinds of expenses will only be allowed if they are reasonable.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I do not want to detain the House, that is a valid point. But I do not

want the point which the Honourable Member made to be lost only in relation to claims arising out of insurance settlements or whatever, but what now will be the impact in relation to those, and there are a lot of people now who benefit from these group health programmes and in particular low income health benefit programmes for low income workers.

What is the impact or the implications of this legislation to the options that may be available to them in terms of health care. And I think that is the essence of the point, and I say it is not a point that should be lost. I do not know if it is something the Minister can answer because if I were in her position, I do not think I could. One does not know how the insurance companies are going to react to that, but it is something that will happen and you need to be conscious of in relation to legislation of this sort.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank all Honourable Members who spoke in this debate. I think it has turned out to be an interesting one and to have much more meat in it than maybe what Members on both sides at first anticipated.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I always said he has comedy in his genes and he cannot help the way in which he speaks and therefore the Honourable Member for St. Michael East really caused the quality of the debate to deteriorate. I cannot speak to that. It was enough that while he was describing this as an attempt at obeah and witchcraft, all other Honourable Members on the other side who spoke, agreed that it had much utility and was a good thing and I am glad that we were able to reach that kind of consensus on this matter.

A number of issues have been raised, some of greater substance than others and I am going to try to address the major issues which have come up during the course of the speeches made by Honourable Members, I am not going to do so in the order which they were raised I am just going to deal with the substance of the individual comments.

Let me speak first in relation to an issue raised by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy regarding one of his constituents. There are always two sides to every story and I knew that in his style of presentation that we could not have had all of the facts before the House or could not have had them accurately.

I therefore now wish to say what is the situation in relation to that case. Let me say, that whether in fact the

facts which I am going to give now are accurate or not, that if the relatives of this individual feel aggrieved, they have a right to, and I believe, have already seen counsel on the matter and that the matter can go the full course of the legal route, if in fact they deem that is necessary. 4.55 p.m.

Having practised law myself for 17 years I believe that it is not possible to run any health care system anywhere in the world without making errors of various types and therefore when those errors take place and sometimes they are legitimate errors, it is not negligence. There are sometimes errors in the system and when, in fact, those situations take place then, in fact, there is a legal recourse available to the relatives and those aggrieved and I would support them pursuing for it.

Let me turn to what I understand to be the facts of this matter. There are protocols which exist for taking a patient off a life support. Any patient who can support his or her own breathing and no longer needs a life support system is taken off by the doctors, the anaesthetists giving care and they can then determine whether the person should go into ICU and at what stage they can be transferred to a regular ward.

That decision is made. It is a medical decision made by the team. If the patient appears to be brain dead then that patient is seen by a neurologist and consultant independently. If both agree that there is no brain activity and as a consequence the patient cannot survive if taken off the ventilator, the relatives are informed and consent to take them off obtained,

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: You are not a consultant nor a neurologist. Your specialty is tourism and media. The case to which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy referred and we have not mentioned any names but I will just give the facts as we understand them in the Ministry of Health and Environment without prejudice. The patient involved was over 18 years old. That is the first thing. You are talking about a person who is past the age of consent. This is an adult.

The person involved was over 18 years old. They were involved in a motor vehicle accident. They were a pedestrian or spectator at a particular event when the person was struck by a motor vehicle. They were admitted to the surgical intensive care unit and placed on the ventilator. After some time, the patient was again able to breathe on his own and no longer needed the support of the ventilator. The person was taken off the ventilator

and remained in the surgical intensive care unit. At that time he was being fed by nasal gastric tubes. After some time it was determined that keeping the patient on the ICU was not necessary because there was nothing further that could have been done for the patient in the ICU that could not have been done for them given their condition in a regular ward.

The person was seen by a neurologist who developed a prognosis of the patient and a decision was made that the person would not be kept on the ICU but could be transferred or should be transferred because of the prognosis that was made to a regular ward.

He was transferred to the regular ward and subsequently died.

Please bear in mind, that the person was in the intensive care, not on the ventilator or not having life support and therefore one may well draw the conclusion and in fact it could've been the medical opinion that since nothing could have been done at the ICU and since the death was inevitable that you may transfer the person to a regular ward and let them stay there.

A post mortem would have revealed - I believe that one may have been done - the full nature of the injuries and the problems as I indicated. If in fact the family is aggrieved then clearly there are options for them to pursue but this is the nature of the facts as I have given.

When the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke he said that the person was taken off the vent... life support without the parents' permission and that gave the impression...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. I never used the word ventilator yet. So the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: During the course of his comments the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said that the person was on life support and was taken off the life support without the permission of the relatives and therefore died. I have given the history over time and the way it happened. If in fact he has now determined that that method was foolishness, now clearly he substitutes his own medical opinion for that of the professionals.

I have already said in this Chamber that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy shows tremendous

capacity to speak without any collaboration between his brain and his mouth.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber because if one had to look at heads alone one would see that better knowledge comes from this head than that head.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us proceed orderly. We would not want to get into that.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, with every comment he continues to give evidence and support to my remarks. Again he has proven that what I am saying is accurate. No collaboration!

The reality is that I have given the facts. If in fact it is to be pursued in another place, clearly the family is free to do so.

Members raised the issue of the Lions Eye Care Centre. The Ministry is in the process of meetings. We have met with the Lions and we have met with members of the medical staff of the hospital. We have had an analysis done by the consultants of Boston University and I held a meeting with all the ophthalmologists in Barbados and the Ophthalmological Society of the West Indies. Their representatives came in from all across the region. 5.05 p.m.

During the course of that meeting and when the analysis by the consultants was done, it was determined that the cost of running the Eye Care Centre would be exorbitant, that it was overbuilt in terms of capacity. As a matter of fact, one statement made by the professionals was that Barbados would have to have an active blindness programme to get enough blind people to fill the capacity that particular Centre had. It was overbuilt not only in terms of local capacity but in terms of regional capacity.

When the analysis was done of the number of people who were, in fact, blind, and, Mr. Speaker, many people do not recognise that there is a difference between blindness as defined by the medical experts. If you cannot read the first line of the spelling chart, the chart that all of us who have glasses where one goes in and the doctor says: "Please read this line," you are defined as medically blind.

Mr. Speaker, by that definition I believe I would be medically blind but that does not mean that I am going to the Lions Eye Care Centre to have any treatment or surgery for my eyes. That is the reality. The figures that were used in terms of the number of...

Mr, D, St, E, KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir, The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving a personal judgment on something that relates to the total population of Barbados, Now we understand why the Eye Care Centre is not opened in this country because the Honourable Minister has a personal problem with that Eye Care Centre and that is not fair to the people,,,

Mr, SPEAKER: Okay, you have made your point of order, Sir, Could we proceed?

Hon, Miss H, E, THOMPSON: Mr, Speaker, I wish to have those comments withdrawn because to say that I have a personal problem is to suggest that I am stopping the place from opening because of something that is personal to me and something outside of my professional judgment, That is to impute improper motives to me, Sir, and I should like those comments withdrawn and struck from the record.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you have heard the Honourable Member. Are you imputing improper motives to the Honourable Member?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No. Mr. Speaker, for me to withdraw my remarks, the Honourable Minister would have to withdraw the remarks that were made before.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not let us go down that line, please. The Honourable Member has stated no improper motives are being imputed. Could we proceed, please?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am going to accept the ruling of the Chair but it seems to me that if you use language, even if you do not intend certain consequences, natural consequences flow from putting certain words together. If, in fact, the consequence of what is said does me injury then I am entitled to claim the protection of the Chair, but I will accept your ruling.

I was talking about the Lions Eye Care Centre. It was determined, therefore, that the Lions Eye Care Centre was overbuilt in relation to capacity.

I would also wish to make the point that though the Lions Eye Care Centre was scheduled to have been opened in November, 1994, it was then under construction and that was the prospective opening day, that no monies were provided in that year's Estimates for the opening of the Centre. No monies were provided to staff it, to run it or to meet the recurrent costs. Over and above that, even though the Centre was called the Lions Caribbean Eye Care Centre, the reality is that there was no provision made for any Caribbean Government to contribute a cent to the financing of that Centre. It was all going to fall to the Government of Barbados.

The agreement at the time prior to our coming to office was that the Lions throughout the Caribbean their role would be to find the funding to pay only the air travel costs for people in the region who needed the care to get to Barbados, It therefore meant that given the fact that it would be a very high cost to operate it, that because no money was provided, because it was overbuilt in terms of capacity, and that there would be no contribution made from other Caribbean Governments, the Government of Barbados has to rethink how the Centre will be used,

We met with the ophthalmologists and have tried to develop a plan for the utilisation of that facility. We have met with the Lions, We have met with various other interest groups and we have met with the doctors and medical personnel at the hospital in relation to what are the needs of the Eye Care Department generally and other departments, and how the 3 storeys, because it was a building with 3 storeys, only 2 of which were outfitted, how that floor space could best be utilised. Based on that we now have a plan which we will shortly put before the Cabinet. Subsequent to that I will speak to the public on the matter at greater length and will make the plan public.

One of the other issues that was thrown in to confuse the debate was the issue of internship at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. For a long time the university, BAMP and other interested agencies had been pressing the Government to limit the number of persons who are getting medical training.

Caps exist in relation to law and other professional training. There is a limit to the number of people who can study law in any given year and there are limits in relation to other professions. That has been done to protect the profession itself. You reach a stage where once training is available sometimes so many people access the training that at the end of the day there is not sufficient room for them to work and earn. That is where the supply can exceed the demand.

It has been done, as I said, in relation to law and a decision was taken, based on requests by BAMP and other persons in the medical fraternity to limit, to put a cap on the number of persons who would get medical training. Like I said, that has been done in relation to law. It has been done in relation to other professions so that this is not new.

The cap was taken since last year. I believe the University and everybody involved was informed at the time. The cap on the training of medical students is different from the positions available for interns.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael East during the course of his comment seemed unable to understand this distinction,

Year before last, the Ministry of Health and the Environment specifically set up a task force to look at the issue of interns in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. For 10 years there had been a problem with interns at the hospital. Every year interns would come out and there would not be adequate space for the interns. That problem was exacerbated when Mount Hope came on stream because it meant that a larger number of people had access to the training facility and could therefore qualify to intern and there were limited spaces at the hospital, 5,15 p.m.

I set up a task force. The task force was chaired by the then Chief Medical Officer of Health of Barbados. Sitting on the task force were the Hospital Director, the then President of BAMP, the then President of the Junior Medical Doctors Association, The Association of Medical Students of Barbados they did not have a seat on the task force but they were written and informed of its existence and they were allowed to appear before the task force to make oral presentation or to send written representation to the task force. The Caribbean Programme Coordinator of PAHO, the Chairman of the Medical Staff Committee of the Hospital, the Hospital Director sat on the Task Force, a Senior Medical Officer of Health from the Ministry and a Permanent Secretary sat on the task force. There was representation from the University of the West Indies on the task force, it had wide representation.

One of the responsibilities with which the task force was charged was to determine what was the maximum carrying capacity of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for interns. That task force determined that the maximum carrying capacity of the hospital for interns was 40, Commensurate with this evaluation by that body, which was well qualified to make that representation, the number of intern posts at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was moved to 40 since last year. That is the maximum number of interns that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can carry. We cannot carry any more. They used a scientific process and various protocols and they determined that not every bed in the hospital is available as a teaching bed. There has to be, in order for the person to qualify or for the training to be recognised, a certain ratio of beds and patients to interns and to consultants training them. We looked at the size of the hospital, the beds available, the consultants available, a broad number of criteria was established and they determined that the maximum number of interns that the hospital can train is 40 and we moved the interns to 40. As a matter of fact, to do that we had to virtually double the number of existing posts. Immediately that decision was taken, BAMP was informed that we were moving

these posts to 40. The University of the West Indies, the Junior Medical Doctors Association and the Association of Barbados Medical Students were also informed, every interest group and all the stakeholders knew what decision had been taken,

We now have at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital more space for interns than we have ever had before. A decision was also taken that commensurate with all this, the hospitals in the Eastern Caribbean which could be accredited, that every attempt would be made by the accreditation committee to get these accredited so that persons who want to do internship outside of Barbados or where the number of interns exceeded 40 that their internship could be done somewhere in the rest of the Caribbean,

This is nothing new, We have had Barbadian medical students, to call one of the most famous, Sir George Alleyne, training and working outside of Barbados and it has inured to the benefit of this country that we have been able to train people and place them in posts outside of Barbados. We often boast as a people that wherever you go in the world, you can find a Bajan and that is true. A couple of weeks ago, I was in a store and I asked somebody in New York the price of something and a girl with a Bajan accent turned out to be from St. Lucy. The Honourable Member from St. Lucy will be pleased to hear that. She spoke to me and I turned and asked her where she was from and she said Barbados. I laughed and chatted with her. This is part of what this accreditation of the hospitals of the rest of the Caribbean would do.

We also took a decision at that time that the post for interns and for house officers and senior house officers in the other health institutions would be increased and we have done that. The number of doctors who are now able to work in Barbados since 1996 has significantly increased. You have an additional 18 or 20 posts at the level of house officer or interns. That is 18 or 20 new posts which did not exist before. Those are persons who would not have been able to get internship positions in Barbados previously.

In addition to that the posts for doctors available throughout the Polyclinic services have been increased. Similarly, the posts in the Geriatric services have been increased as too have been the post at the Psychiatric Hospital. In reality, the increases about which the Honourable Member for St. Michael East has been speaking about, there have been increases in the votes to these institutions, not only to increase supplies but also in relation to the number of doctors that we are taking on.

The whole rationale behind it was to provide not only work for medical personnel but to insure that

people throughout the health services in Barbados have greater access to numbers. It is also my view that if we have interns who are trained throughout the health services then you are going to see a doctor who is more experienced, who will have seen a wider number of complaints presented in a different setting whether it is the Psychiatric or Geriatric setting, or at a level of the community setting through the polyclinic. You will be giving every doctor broader training. That was the thinking behind it and all of this was thrown to sidetrack the thing and to say that there is confusion in health and that now there are less intern posts available at the hospital.

The reality is that there are more intern posts available at the hospital now than have been in our history and there are greater medical posts available throughout the health services in Barbados than there have ever been. I do not deny that there are problems within the health care system.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of elucidation. During my presentation I made the point about training facilities and I wonder if the Minister would state whether all of those students who have gained acceptance to the accredited medical schools in the area for the training that we are talking about, if they have been placed.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Could you say that again, please.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I believe there were two or three or four, I do not know what the number was, students who had gained acceptance to an accredited medical school, Mount Hope in Trinidad, whether after all the Minister has told us whether they have found places to get into those schools.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I am going to answer you and I am going to do so by a circuitous route. One of the things that we established last year, which never happened, was a greater degree of collaboration between the Ministry of Health, as it then was and the Ministry of Education. Because interns are accepted within the setting of the Q.E.H., people view this as a health problem. In reality it is a matter relating to the Ministry of Education. It is the Ministry of Education that is responsible for training. I know that the Honourable Member would be aware of that but the public does not necessarily understand the distinction.

What used to happen, prior to last year, was that there was no collaboration between the Ministry of Education, i.e. the Faculty of Medicine of the U.W.I, and the Ministry of Health. We were in a possession, for instance, of the

information in relation to how many people were in the system for the next five years, so that we could plan down the road that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would need "X" posts, we will have to put another number of posts in this institution or that institution or to say even that there was a contraction in the number. What would happen is that in a given academic year we would be told, well you are going to have 40 people to train or you are going to have 30 people coming out as interns and then the Hospital would be forced to find places for them. But you well know that the way the Government financial year runs that money to accommodate them would have had to go in at the time of Estimates. If you do not know how many people you are going to have to train ... 5.25 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you have 2 minutes to wind up, please.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: If you do not know how many people you are going to have to train you cannot plan for them and what we did was to ask the University to tell us how many people in fact are in the system over the next 5 years so that the Ministry of Health can make provision for them. It is because of the nature of that collaboration and planning that I am now able to tell you that in fact yes, all of the persons who would come out this year will have places and that in the future because of the degree of collaboration that we are having we are going to know how many people are coming and how and where they can be placed, whether in Barbados or elsewhere. The problem has been solved, I am happy to say.

I have, I believe, one and a half more minutes, Sir. I think that I would just take that opportunity to say that in fact the Minister of Education is looking at the training that can be offered at Community College in relation to support for the allied health services because a lot of the training is now done outside of Barbados which means that it is at high cost and enough numbers cannot get access to it.

In relation to whether group insurance premiums will go up because of the access to this service, I do not think that will necessarily happen because we did not see an increase in the past when other paramedical services were added but even if there were to be a small increase in group health premiums the fact is that it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health to provide access to these services and then in fact, later on, the insurance coverage of the persons who are caught in that net will deal with those. But we will provide the services within the public health care system and therefore the poorer sectors of the community will be able to access these services free of cost. I acknowledge that and this increase will be of tremendous help to sportsmen and to agricultural workers and to the poor people in the community. I am grateful

for the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West who does agree that the Ministry of Health is indeed doing a good thing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will you conclude, please?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Yes, Sir. By way of conclusion I would just inform the House that at present there are practising in Barbados 11 optometrists, 14 radiographers, 6 occupational therapists, 2 therapeutic radiographers, 3 chiropractors, 9 ophthalmic dispensers and 6 psychologists. I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to bringing to this Chamber the expansion of the services even further in the near future.

I now beg that this Bill be read a second time.

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the House went into Committee on the Bill, 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 H. E. THOMPSON, 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. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Paramedical Professions (Amendment) Act, 1997. 5.35 p.m.

ORDER NO. 7 - THE PUBLIC DOCUMENTS (EXEMPTION FROM DIPLOMATIC OR CONSULAR LEGISLATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1997

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not think this Bill should delay us unduly. In 1961, Sir, there was a Convention passed at the Hague which is reproduced in the laws of Barbados and enacted in our local law as Chapter 122. It is called the Public Documents (Exemption from Diplomatic or Consular Legislation) Act commencing

on the 26th July 1965 and the Hague Convention abolished the requirement of legislation for foreign public document in a series of articles, specifically, 15, which we have in our laws.

Now, the purpose of that legislation was to eliminate the need to have documents authenticated by diplomatic or consular officers and the Convention was their entity to force in Great Britain before independence and has been extended to Barbados and reenacted. Barbados is a part of the Hague Convention of 1965, Sir, and the Convention in Article 6, says that each contracting state shall designate by reference to their official functions the authorities who are competent to issue the certificate referred to in the first paragraph of Article 3.

The Government in the past has designated certain persons as competent officials to authenticate these types of documents, Sir, and having regard to the upsurge in activity in the offshore financial services sector, representation was made by the Registrar of Corporate Affairs that the Registrar of Corporate Affairs be added to the list. There is a thing in the Act called an "Apostille" which is just a document that is filled up when these certificates are issued. It is a standard form document which appears in the parent legislation and it sets out the country. The document has been signed by whoever acting in capacity of, and bears the seal and stamp of whatever department and then it is certified by an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The purpose of this amending Bill is quite simply to add the Registrar of Corporate Affairs to the list of persons who are designated such as the Solicitor General, Deputy Solicitor General, Registrar of the Supreme Court, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chief of Protocol and to charge a fee for the certificates of 50 dollars.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office for 1994 in Britain charged similar fees for these things at a rate of 10 pounds.

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

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: 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. R. N. GREENIDGE, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair:

COMMITTEE

Mr, CHAIRMAN; This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee,

Clauses 1 - 4 inclusive, were called and passed,

On the motion of Hon, D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. /?, N. GREENIDGE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the 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. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Public Documents (Exemption from Diplomatic or Consular Legislation) (Amendment) Act, 1997,

Hon, D, A, C, SIMMONS: Mr, Speaker, that brings us to the conclusion of Government's Business for today,

There are two additional documents to be laid, Sir,

Mr, SPEAKER; With the House's permission we will now revert to Government Notices,

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon, D, A, C, SIMMONS: Sir, I am commanded to lay the following:

- 1, Judges (Remuneration of Pensions) (Conditions of Service and Allowances) (Amendment) (No, 2) Regulations, 1997.
- 2, Resolution to approve the Judges (Remuneration and Pensions) (Conditions of Service and Allowances) (Amendment) (No, 2) Regulations, 1997,

ADJOURNMENT

Hon, D, A, C, SIMMONS: Mr, Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Honourable House do now adjourn until Friday, July 11, 1997 at 11,00 o'clock a,m,

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly, 5,45 p,m,

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St Philip North)
MASCOLL, Mr. C. A. (St. Michael North West) St.
JOHN Sir HAROLD, (Christ Church South)
SANDIFORD, Rt. Hon. L. E. (St Michael South)
SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. Thomas) TOPPIN,
Hon. R. St. C. (St. Michael North) TUDOR, Mr. J.
O. (St. Michael East) THOMPSON, Hon. D. J. H.
(St John) THOMPSON, Hon. Miss H. E. (St James
South)