

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, March 6, 1998

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Friday, March 6, 1998.

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. Sir HENRY FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.
(Hons.)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and Minister for the Civil Service)

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

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

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

Mr. F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER, J.P., B.A., Dip. Ed.,
B.Sc.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

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

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

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Canon Ivan Harewood. Mr.

SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes for Tuesday, February 17, 1998.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes of the 17th February have been circulated. Subject to any observations drawn by any Honourable Members, I beg to move that those Minutes be confirmed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Ombudsman (Salary) Order, 1998.
2. The Judges (Salaries) Order, 1998.
3. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 2) Order, 1998.

4. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 3) Order, 1998.
5. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 4) 1998.
6. Severance Payments (Fund Contribution) (Amendment) Regulations, 1997.
7. The Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 1998.
8. The Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 1998.
9. Parliament (Administration) (Salary) Order, 1998.
10. The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) Order, 1998.
11. The Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order, 1998.
12. The Civil Establishment (Part-time Officers) Order, 1998.

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

1. Post Office (Overseas Letter Post) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
2. Post Office (Private Letter Box) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
3. Post Office (Inland Letter Post) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
4. Post Office (Franking Postage Meter Machines) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
5. Post Office (Miscellaneous Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
6. Post Office (International Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
7. Post Office (Postage Paid) Regulations, 1998.
8. Post Office (Local Express Mail Service) Regulations, 1998.
9. Post Office (Domestic Business Reply) Regulations, 1998.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Instruments adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 83rd Session, held in Geneva on June 20, 1996.
2. Annual Report of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council for the period April 1, 1996-March 31, 1997.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Government of the payment of the principal sum of \$10.0 million and the interest thereon for the redemption of housing bonds, to be issued by the Barbados National Bank.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, the Post Office (Validation of Rates of Postage) Bill, 1998 was read a first time.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in moving the suspension of certain Standing Orders, I wish to point out to the House that there are a number of Resolutions on today's Order Paper - not the land acquisition resolutions - resolutions that are consequential upon the settlement with public sector workers' organisations and I would be obliged if the House would consent to letting these matters be done in all their stages today.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it had been agreed previously, before the settlement with the Unions for the improvement in public officers' salaries and conditions, that today would have been devoted to a debate on the Social Investment Bill. These other matters the Government considers of greater urgency than that Bill and so I spoke with the Leader of the Opposition yesterday and got his concurrence that the debate on, and televising of, the Social Investment Bill be postponed to another date and that we devote today to the disposal of these Resolutions. He was eminently agreeable and I am grateful to the Opposition for their co-operation in this regard.

I would throw out to the Opposition now that we would be prepared on Tuesday to do the Social Investment Bill. There will be no cricket. It will be before we get down to Estimates and we could get it out of the way. We are only postponing it for two or three days.

With those observations, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today's sitting.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the order of the day.

ORDER NO. 12 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1998

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the matter before Parliament is an amendment to legislation that will provide Government with the lawful authority to meet the cost of a pay settlement with representatives of the workers in the Public Service of Barbados. I make that point at the outset - to provide Government with the lawful authority - because the notion of legislating public workers wage increases has begun to attract a particular negative connotation of late.

The last wage call for public sector workers expired on 31st March, 1997 and negotiations for a new agreement has been ongoing since November of 1997. It was agreed to by all sides that the negotiations would start in November because the Government had given a commitment earlier in the year to review the implementation of the Value Added Tax and hence it was understood, Sir, that the nature of the wage settlement would take into account any changes in policies arising from the Value Added Tax review.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the remit that was given to Government's negotiators was that the wage settlement had to be consistent with the provisions of the Incomes and Prices Protocol and recognise the lack of productivity related settlements and, if possible, to permit provision for a productivity bonus. It also had to bear some relationship with what has been agreed to by Unions and the private sector to be implemented over the course of the next two years.

In 1997 some 17 settlements were effected between employers, the private sector and trade unions, ranging between 5 percent in the first year, and 3 percent the second year, as the most generous, Sir, and 3 percent in the first year and 3 percent in the second year. It was therefore understood, to the extent that the settlement in the public

sector had to bear a relationship to those parameters, that we would come out in the end with a settlement in that vicinity.

The Government and the Trade Unions had also wished to perpetuate the payment of either a one-shot incentive or a productivity payment. At the end, Sir, it was agreed that that incentive payments would be rolled into the increase for the first year. 11.30a.m.

The amount thought of was \$8 million, as a one-shot incentive payment, which converts into 1 V4%. Therefore, Sir, taking into account the settlements in the private sector, the Government put on the table 5% for the first year, 3% for the second and a one-off incentive payment.

We have agreed with the unions that the one-off incentive payments will be rolled into the first year and hence the agreement that is before us Mr. Speaker, for 6 1/4% in the first year and 3% in the second. The incentive payments therefore have been incorporated into the first year increase.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that this settlement bears a direct relationship, therefore, to what has been agreed to with the private sector. It is set in the context of a rate of inflation for 1997 of 3.6% so it provides for a real income increase, not just a nominal increase. With inflation at 3.6%, the wage settlement is 6 1/4%.

It also has obviously to be seen in the context of the adjustment that the Government has made in relation to the Value Added Tax, the adjustments that the Government has made in relation to an improvement in the income tax allowances and the recent adjustment that the Government has made to increase people's disposable income by reduction in the price of energy products.

Mr. Speaker, it is an agreement that is consistent with the Incomes Protocol. It can be afforded, Mr. Speaker. In the first year, it is going to cost the Government an additional \$40 million and in the second year it will cost the Government an additional \$20 million but once we understand that we have to carry the first year increase into the second year, the additional increase in expenditure on the wage bill will amount to over \$100 million in gross terms over the course of the next 13 months.

Of course, there will be an income tax claw-back. The gross amount is \$100 million over the course of the next 13 months.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that all unions have agreed to this wage settlement. The last occasion on which the unions managed to reach an agreement was in 1992 but on that occasion, sadly, the Police Association did not see eye to eye with the other union members; but we have had

March 6, 1998

a long history of some unions agreeing and not others. On this occasion, we have a situation where all unions have agreed.

I will take the opportunity also to state that this brings to conclusion the wages and salaries part of the negotiations with the trade unions. The unions have also put on the table a long list of things, (45), of other conditions intended to improve the conditions of service of public officers. We will now start negotiating those as well and let me take the opportunity to state that during the process of that exercise with the trade unions we will put on the table all other proposed improvements in conditions for all persons who are paid from the Consolidated Fund. I want to stress that point, Mr. Speaker, because not only have things been put on the table by the trade unions of Barbados but we have also had representations by the Management Commission of Parliament on behalf of parliamentarians.

We have had representation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for improvement of the conditions of foreign service officers. They have suffered badly in the course of the last 5 years and we have just incrementally improved them so that this brings to an end the wages and salaries part of the negotiations with the trade unions. We will now begin additional discussions on improved allowances and other terms and conditions that may not be of a wage nature. And with that opportunity, therefore, we hope to discuss these matters in good faith with the trade unions such that things that have been proposed will not become a subject of suspicion or bad faith.

The unions went into this negotiation with a clear perspective. They are being bound by an Incomes Protocol and have had to ask their members to hold strain. They want to negotiate in good faith that any benefits to be enjoyed by any section of the public service, paid for from the Consolidated Fund, should reflect itself in similar terms to other persons who are being paid from the same Consolidated Fund.

I want to stress the point that in the near future we will be discussing other conditions of service submitted by the unions and other entities representing other persons who are paid from the Consolidated Fund. I want particularly to make that point, Sir, because the question of the proposals of the Management Commission of Parliament has been the subject of controversy, Sir. They have become part of that process by which settlements and other allowances are paid from the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there is a lot of controversy in what is before the House today but just to say, however, for the record, that over the course of the last 2 years that, as our circumstances have allowed we have

sought to improve the conditions of public officers. We have established over 2 100 new posts in the last few years. There have been over 850 promotions. We have sought to improve the physical conditions under which public servants function and the Attorney General has carried out a splendid task in incrementally upgrading the physical facilities of all of the Magistrates Courts and the police stations and the post offices, and we are involved, Sir, in refurbishing. We have not yet finished all, but we are committed to doing them, Sir.

We are on the drawing board, of course, as you know, Mr. Speaker, in the construction of a new public sector complex at Warrens.

We have increased interest free loans available to the public officers which exist for vehicular and other purposes. We have extended the period of repayment of car loans from 5 to 7 years and we have, in addition, made provision for principals of schools to be able to have vehicle loans. In addition to that, we have made substantial changes to the pensions arrangements under which public officers are employed. For example, we have made amendments to the various Acts relating to pensions to enable the movement of pensionable public officers to boards while maintaining their pension rights and, in addition, and most importantly, there was an amendment to the Pensions Act and the Regulations to that Act to allow the emoluments earned by persons while they are acting in higher posts, as well as emoluments earned by persons acting in temporary posts over a period of 36 months, to be taken into account in computing their pension rights. 11.40a.m.

Sir, that is an important new departure for hitherto emoluments earned by a person while acting in a temporary post were not taken into account in computing a person's pension. Now, that is possible and the 36 months of acting or temporary service need not be continuous but can be aggregated.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last few years \$2.5 million in increased allowances have been paid to public servants ranging from increased washing allowances to increased travelling allowances and the like. The Government is committed generally to being fair to the public service while being faithful to the provisions of the Incomes Protocol and taking account of the fiscal position of the country and the setting of standards for the private sector. All of these precepts have really guided us in this year's negotiations.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to formally thank all who have been part of the exercise. I want to thank the Government negotiating team, the Permanent Secretary and particularly the Deputy Permanent Secretary who has been in the exercise from the very outset.

As usual, as is the case with these matters, Sir, the negotiations have been very spirited, sometimes controversial, but I am pleased that at the end of the day we have been able to bring to this Parliament a settlement that we can say to the House has been agreed to by all.

I beg to move, Sir, that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Very briefly, Mr. Speaker. This is not an issue that attracts any controversy or certainly any opposition from Honourable Members on this Side. The public workers of Barbados, certainly between 1991 and the present, have made laudable sacrifices so far as the country's attempt to keep afloat is concerned. It is understandable that now the stage has been reached where wages and salaries are to be settled, that any sensitive or humane Government would want to take into account the sacrifices which the public officers of the country have made over the last 6 to 7 years. Therefore, we on this Side are pleased that an agreement has been reached that meets with the approval both of the Government and the unions, and certainly from all the feedback which I have got, the union leaders have been able to convince their members that a just and fair settlement has been reached. That is commendable and I think it says something about our maturity as a people, our ability to distinguish between when a situation of crisis exists that requires sacrifice and when things have improved where the bounty can be shared.

I think I should add my voice to that of the Honourable Member for St. Peter in congratulating all sides for the spirit of good faith in which the negotiations were conducted, to congratulate the unions on their tenacity and clarity of purpose even in the negotiations. We look forward to the other features of negotiations between the trade unions and the public officers so far as those features relate to the conditions of service of the public officers of Barbados. They render yeoman service to this country and no settlement, we on this Side believe, is too generous for them in circumstances where they have made the kind of sacrifices they made over the last 6-7 years.

I just want to congratulate all sides for the good faith and the magnanimity in which the negotiations were conducted. We look forward to other dimensions of the conditions of service of public officers coming to the House where we can again add our voices to any agreements reached. The Resolution will have the support of Honourable Members on this Side and we wish the public officers and the unions well in all future negotiations.

I am obliged to you.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, we on this Side...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Since I came into the House I have been having difficulty with the system. I cannot make out what members are saying because there is something wrong. We are getting a feedback which is causing reverberation and I cannot understand what is going on. If there is something wrong with the system let us find out what it is but I have to hear what the Honourable Members are saying.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is the system. It is obvious that one of the gains is turned up too high.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Opposition for their support for this Resolution and for their agreement to facilitate the debate today.

Sir, some years ago the leadership of the unions called upon public workers to be restrained in their demands for salary increases and to put on the front burner improved terms and conditions of service. We were then in Opposition and we recall the calls of those unions very clearly. It also meant that those calls for restraint, but for improved conditions of service, were not lost upon us when we became the Government. This Government, since its assumption of office has, I believe, granted two wage increases, this one being the third, during the time we have been the Government - less than four years. I had better say, Sir, two wage increases and a productivity payment. We have tried systematically and in a structured way to respond sympathetically to the concerns of public sector workers for improved conditions particularly the physical conditions under which they are called to work. 11.50a.m.

I am sure that the Minister of Education could recite almost a litany of remedial measures that she has taken over the years and the number of buildings that have been repaired and are currently being repaired and that will be repaired in this financial year and the next financial year.

I could speak to my Ministry specifically, starting first in Bridgetown... I have to put this in the records...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am discussing the terms and conditions of public workers and the improvements to them, Sir.

Sir, Central Police Station...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, we do not owe anybody who was doing work on the Police Station.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Ask me about it during the Estimates. Central Police Station has been upgraded and restored in such a way that people take pride in working in that building. Not to say how attractive it looks to the passerby.

In the Magistrates Courts in town - every Magistrate's Court has been completely refurbished and air-conditioned. The Magistrates and the staff working in there can now work in more commodious and congenial surroundings.

I am only saying that this is in pursuance of a policy that we had when we started.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am looking at the High Court now, Sir. There were two additional courts built and properly furnished. Three were refurbished last summer in the months of August and September.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I have to start preparing a record of promises and performance. Five courts and the Library were completely renovated and upgraded. All the Judges Chambers were fixed, fixed to the point where a Jamaican judge came here recently and when he saw the quality of the Library, the courtrooms and the Judges Chambers, he said that they had nothing in Kings Street that could compare with them.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member is asking a question that deals with the human condition.

Sir, at the Holetown Complex, we have done work. When we took that Complex, it was new. It was opened on September, 2, 1994, and within less than a year termites had taken over the whole of the kitchen area.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I think it was a tree that was responsible.

We cleaned up down there and put in all the furniture that was necessary. Those buildings at Holetown were opened for use by postal workers and the police and no furniture was acquired for those buildings at Holetown. They just rushed four days before the Elections to open the Complex and did not make any provision for furniture.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That is a fact. The policemen had to borrow furniture from hotels and beg for some.

Sir, then we went to Crab Hill Police Station and did work there. The balance of work that has to be done at Crab Hill and Belleplaine will be done after April.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am putting my record on the record - for a reason that will shortly become obvious.

Sir, we are trying at Districts B and C to complete the work there by March 31st. We have a lovely new court at Boarded Hall. District C is being worked on. Boarded Hall should finish by March 31st as there have been problems there with the contractors.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We will talk about that in the Estimates. You had five murders for the year. That has nothing to do with terms and conditions. There were five for the year and there were 30 in 1990. There were a lot less than in your time.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Send for the Police Commissioner's Report 1994. Ask Mr. Lewis to bring it and we will get the numbers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I keep quiet when they are speaking and I am speaking and I would have expected the Honourable Member to keep quiet and afford me some patience here. But let him talk, Sir, because there is no record that he has ever had, even as Minister of Health, than can compare with the record of the present Minister of Health.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am talking about the Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member really has to be fair. I have not spoken in this debate. Why is the Honourable Member attacking me, Sir. I have not said a word in this debate. Is he trying to draw me in, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure that I heard your voice. I was looking in the opposite direction but I thought I heard your voice.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You thought so, Sir? Sir, you must be mistaken.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Standing Order 28 says that a Member must sit in his place in silence when another Member is speaking.

Sir, we are not trying to trifle the Honourable Member but if there is a record of improved conditions, that record must be put and this is the best place to put it, Sir.

Sir, the policemen have had their washing allowances increased. Police Inspectors from \$924 a year to \$1 020. The other ranks from \$852.00 a year to \$936.00. This is in the period 1995 to 1997. Fire Officers, Station Officers from \$888.00 to \$972.00, other ranks from \$780.00 to \$900.00. That same figure applies to nurses and related staff at the Psychiatric Hospital, Community Health Services, District Hospitals and National Nutrition Centre. 12.00 noon

Plain clothes allowances were increased, Sir, for Customs Officers, Court Clerks, and Marshals from \$996.00 to \$1 092.00. People talk about public officers complaining, Marshals sicking out for a day and so on, they had an increase in their plain clothes allowance from \$996.00 to \$1 092.00. Uniform for gazetted officers from \$1 800.00 to \$1 980.00. Detectives from \$1 368.00 to \$1 500.00. Inspectors \$1 224.00 to \$1 344.00. Station Sergeants from \$1 152.00 to \$1 272.00. Constables \$1 008.00 to \$1 104.00. In that time too, Sir, fixed travelling moved from \$6 900.00 a year to \$7 860.00. Those are some of the increases. Even the Permanent Secretaries and related grades had increases in their entertainment from \$7 800.00 to \$9 000.00.

Sir, as much as this is happening, I will leave that one until the Estimates when we do the Ministry of Labour because the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has indicated that the Marshals need more numbers. That is absolutely true, Sir. There has not been an increase in the establishment for years. The establishment is 52. On Monday, 10 stayed home. On Tuesday about 7. All are back to work now. But we made representation, Sir, in a memorandum dated 7th November to the Ministry of the Civil Service for improved conditions and increased numbers. We recommended an increase of 10 because they are awkward departments, Sir. When a Marshal goes on leave there is no substitute that you can bring on to do his work so the work remains and there is a pileup. Before the Registrar, Miss Belle, became Chief Parliamentary Counsel, interviews were held between herself, the Chief Marshal, the

Chief Personnel Officer and a number of persons were interviewed and short-listed.

We have a third court doing criminal assizes. Obviously we needed more staff. Two new marshals were assigned as from Monday, the same day that 10 refused to work. But on the 30th December last year, I spoke to all of the marshals in the Court of Appeal room. I read to them the memorandum that we had sent the month before to the Ministry of Civil Service and we took some additional points on board. They asked for a vehicle. Within three weeks of that meeting they had a new vehicle. We explained to them that the memorandum had said we wanted 10 posts. I assured them that I would make the necessary representations for the posts.

At Estimates Committee meeting this year in January the Prime Minister, in the presence of all, including representatives from the Ministry of the Civil Service agreed that we would give them the additional staff. They will get the additional staff from the 1st of April. Members of the Registry were there and could have told them. But the fact is that they are getting additional numbers. This does not mean that I want anybody to be calling me, because as soon as they hear this my phone will be ringing non-stop, all kinds of people calling begging for a marshal's job because that is a popular area. The fact is that people have been chosen already and short-listed ever since last year. What is remarkable is that I heard on Saturday night that they were planning a sick-out and I asked why. The concern was, when represented to me, that there was some travelling allowance which had been due to them for the 2 months and they had not got it.

Now, Sir, you will recall last month we came here for a supplementary for \$39 million. Included in that supplementary were sums to pay travelling allowance throughout the system because the rates had changed last April and the calculations were deficient. Money was voted in this House last month to pay the arrears of travelling allowances. But, the lady who was the financial comptroller as it were, in the Registration Department had moved and gone to Education. A new person took over in the Registry and was getting accustomed to the system, so there was a little delay after the money had been released by the Ministry of Finance. 12.10p.m.

On Sunday last week when they were planning not to come to work on Monday, their cheques were being prepared so that Monday when they did not come out, the cheques were there waiting for them. They never checked. They did not even check with their Union. According to the Union, only from the NUPW, none of them were from BWU. But, according to Mr. Goddard from the NUPW they did not check with him. They just decided not to

March 6, 1998

work Monday because of money and the money was ready. Silly.

Anyhow, Sir, they should be getting the additional staff in the new financial year. We do not give additional staff at the end of a financial year when we are running out of funds. We do not have funds to pay for posts illegally, but they are going to get it from the 1st of April. I wish to mention, Sir, because I think I have a public responsibility to let the House know, that that matter is settled and the Marshals are back at work.

Sir, I also should mention, before sitting down, that the Government is also conscious of the security concerns of its workers in certain sensitive departments particularly those which have to deal with cash from the public. By the first of April, every Post Office in this country will have a security guard posted.

Sir, I also wish to say for the sake of the records, that in addition to granting the postal workers duty free concessions in respect of their motor cycles and parts, and I will speak during the Estimates on new things that are being done... But, never before, if you research the records of the Post Office will you find that such a consistent effort has been made to improve the working conditions of postal workers as we have done in the last two years.

For example, the Eagle Hall Post Office's roof was leaking, they went on television and the roof was completely repaired. The General Post Office was completely repaired, the sorting office completely refurbished. St. Philip Post Office moved to a new and more commodious surroundings from "the little black hole of Calcutta" that they were in for so many years. Christ Church Post Office is being refurbished. Naturally, St. Thomas Post Office has been completely refurbished. St. Peter Post Office is being moved from its present site on the sea side and a new Post Office is being built in St. Peter in the complex being developed by the Barbados National Bank.

I will speak in the Estimates about the new Air Mail facility at the Airport and the resiting of the St. Joseph Post Office which is planned for Tamarind Hall. A new Post Office will be built also at the Glebe, St. George. In the Government complex at Warrens that the Prime Minister spoke about in his opening address, we will be putting a postal facility out there too. A big Centre like that ought to have postal facilities integrated within the complex.

We are proud, Sir, of our contribution as a Government to improving the terms and conditions of employment to our public workers.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, it is true. It has been possible because the Government has so well managed the economy, Sir, and Government's finances as to make the where-with-all available to do these works. It did not happen by chance. It is the consequence of the good financial management that the IMF recently complimented the Government for.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

ORDER NO. 11- TO MOVE THAT THIS 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 Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, the House resolved itself into
Committee of Supply, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.*

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

ITEM (a)- RESOLUTION TO GRANT \$22813 178
FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND TO SUPPLE-
MENT THE ESTIMATES 1997-98 AS SET OUT IN
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 16, 1997-98

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, there have been three developments in the course of the financial year that require a substantial supplementary to Head 13, the Prime Minister's Office.

First the Government has made a decision to provide assistance to the West Indies Players' Association to enable them to establish a headquarters and a secretariat in Barbados. We will have that headquarters, Sir, opened on 30th March and we will be providing them secretariat facilities, together with a room so that they can display the memorabilia of the West Indian players and generally to accord the West Indian cricket players, past and present with the honour and dignity of having a home.

We believe that Barbados has made a sufficiently substantial contribution to West Indian cricket that there should be a permanent presence of West Indian cricket of a dignified manner in this country, Sir. I am conscious of the fact that other decisions were taken by others in relation to the West Indies Cricket Board and the

Players' Association has been graciously pleased to want to have an enduring relationship with this country, Sir.
12.20p.m.

We will be funding a secretariat for the West Indies Players' Association and providing them with facilities that they can display the prowess and the accomplishment of the West Indies Cricket team which remains still the greatest icon of West Indian unity. I am pleased that they have chosen Barbados to be the place where the players, Sir, put down their home. We will be making provision for that at the Sir Garfield Sobers Gymnasium which symbolically should be the home of West Indies cricket as well but that is a different matter.

I am also saying that we do not negotiate in public, but the matter of the ability of the Barbadian public to see the test match that is going to take place in Barbados is of concern to the public and to the Government and, even as we speak to you, steps are being made to ensure that if it is at all possible; and I suspect it could become possible once all the tickets have been sold that the public of Barbados will not be deprived of the capability...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: But more of that, Sir, will be discussed later.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we also took a decision during the course of the year to locate an important arm of the regional negotiating machinery in this country.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. Could the Honourable Member tell us whether the test match will be televised?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, that unfortunately does not fall entirely to the discretion of the Government of Barbados. If it were at our discretion, it certainly would be. The West Indies Cricket Board has an arrangement with the Caribbean Broadcasting Union about home countries not being able to see it, but we are now in a position where there seems to be a certainty that the match was sold out in advance so that the disability that would stand in the way of Barbadians being able to see it obviously can now be taken off the table and we have...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir, I am still unclear after the obfuscation of the Prime Minister's reply. Would the Prime Minister state categorically whether he supports the view of the public and the view of the National Democratic Party that the test match should be televised in view of the difficulty of Barbadians to obtain tickets?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, part of the difficulty being experienced by the Barbados public in getting tickets is the large influx of tourists and English visitors in particular. I do not think the House would be at all opposed to the notion that the Barbados Tourism Authority as a goodwill gesture could help defray the costs of any televising of the match. I do not think that the House would at all feel... That is, as a promotional gesture.

Not only does the Government feel strongly that the public should see it but we have identified the funds to pay the CBU in the event that it is put in place.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Right Honourable Prime Minister is misleading the House because we have not dealt with any supplementary in this House to defray any costs but we have dealt with a Resolution guaranteeing money for the Barbados Cricket Association which is in a sense guaranteeing money for the West Indies Cricket Board. I am saying that the citizens of Barbados who backed that money have a right to see television coverage of that cricket match.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the arrangement for the sponsorship of test cricket in Barbados falls not to the Barbados Cricket Association but to the West Indies Cricket Board. That is the point, Sir, that obviously is not understood by the Member for St. Lucy. There is a difference between the West Indies Cricket Board and the Caribbean Broadcasting Union and we are trying now to see if an arrangement can be put in place. Negotiations are taking place even as I speak to you, Sir, but I can say that the cost of having it televised is not an issue because those funds have already been secured. That is all I will say now at this stage.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I said there were 3 matters engaging the Prime Minister's Office. One was our funding of a secretariat for the West Indies Cricketers' Association and the second was the establishment of a regional machinery in Barbados and during the course of the Estimates, I would love if we could get involved this year in particular, and I will say why.

Our external economic negotiations. In the course of this year Barbados and the region will have to begin formal negotiations with the European Union for a successor arrangement to LOME IV and it is anticipated as well, Mr. Chairman, that beginning this year 1998 we will also have to begin formal negotiations pertaining to the creation of a free trade area of the Americas by the year 2005. The formal negotiations for both will begin this year.

Both negotiations will be very complex and in the case of the European Union recently, as members of the House may be aware, the European Commission has

given a negotiating mandate to the Union that would on the face of it set out to fracture the solidarity that has historically existed between countries of the African, Pacific and Caribbean regions in their relationship to Europe.

Europe is speaking in terms, not of one general state arrangement, but a number of state arrangements applicable to the region, and in order to ensure that the region is as prepared as possible, the Barbados Government has agreed to make a contribution towards facilitating the operation of a regional negotiating machinery from Barbados and part of the technical core of the machinery is located in Barbados. Other administrative parts are elsewhere in the region but we are seeking also to enable them to steer the information technology and other facilities that exist at the Ministry of International Business.

Part of this supplementary, Sir, is to meet the cost of running the offices for the regional negotiating machinery in Barbados.

The third matter, Sir, is in light of the need for us to participate in negotiations within post-LOME IV and the FTCA and in light of the fact that they have given a commitment to put most of the major elements of a single market and a single economy in the Caribbean in place by 1999, I have started to restructure the Office of the Prime Minister to develop a capability to facilitate my participation in all of those deliberations in a better way than in the past.

The Prime Minister of Barbados is responsible as the lead Prime Minister for putting in place a single market and a single economy and effectively we have sought in the course of the last 18 months to put the single market and the single economy within a legal framework that it has not hitherto had. Members are aware, of course, that it is a CARICOM treaty and it is conceived that the single market and the single economy will be given a legal definition by way of 9 protocols, the first of which has already been signed and ratified which changed the voting pattern and rights in CARICOM. Protocol 2 has already also been signed and that pertains to the provision of rights in relation to the movement of capital freedom of movement of services and the right to establishment of companies in the region and at present, Sir, an inter-governmental task force is in the process of creating protocols on industrial policy, agricultural policy, trade policy and also a protocol dealing with specially disadvantaged regions, sectors and industries for CARICOM.

It is anticipated that additional protocols pertaining to settlement of disputes will be ready so that by the year 1999 the single market and the single economy in

CARICOM will all be provided for within the CARICOM Treaty.

So the Office of Prime Minister has had to take on a Permanent Secretary with special assignment to assist in preparatory work for the single market, single economy, the FTCA and post-LOME IV. Part of the resources being sought here are to facilitate that process, Sir. 12.30p.m.

The major item under Head 13, however, pertains to the Defence Force. We have had major difficulties with the Trident. It is now undergoing a comprehensive overhaul and \$1.3 million is being sought under Head 13 to carry out major repairs on the Trident.

I think, Sir, I have comprehensively covered most of the purposes for which funds are being sought under Head 13.

I beg to move that Head 13 stand part, Sir.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman,! obviously will not be speaking against the supplementing of the amounts but the Prime Minister gave us brief insights into two issues relating to this supplementary which require some response, in my view.

First of all I am very pleased that the West Indian Players' Association has displayed much more maturity in their approach to establishing a headquarters than the counter body on the other side, the West Indies Cricket Board. I on occasion in this House had to make a comment or two which were subsequently interpreted by some other people as if they sent me here. They do not always seem to understand that when I speak, especially in this House, that I speak for a very large number of people first in my constituency and in Barbados who otherwise would have no representation and who have no voice where these decisions are made. Therefore when I speak, I am not only voicing my opinion but I am voicing the collective wisdom of a large number of people in a part of Barbados called St. Michael West. Those people have sagacity that some of the members of the West Indies Cricket Board have not yet seen, far less approached.

The West Indies Cricket Players' Association was born out of the realisation, especially soon after the Packer era, that the West Indies players needed to have a voice in the decision making of the West Indies cricket affairs. I do not intend to speak at length to that. Another time will come.

I want to address in particular the issue about the capacity to display the exploits of West Indians on the cricket field, memorabilia and other material.

Mr. Chairman, at the risk of violating the oath which we take as a Cabinet Minister, when the Honourable Wes Hall was Minister responsible for Sports, I journeyed to Australia and I went to the Melbourne Cricket ground. In 1988, I went to a Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting which was held in Melbourne, Australia. We were at the Hilton Hotel which is literally across from the Melbourne Cricket ground. We went across to the Australian Cricket Museum which is housed at Melbourne.

When I went to the Museum, I saw a pair of briefs belonging to Sir Frank Worrell, shoes that used to be owned by Sir Gary Sobers, gloves that were worn by Sir Everton Weekes, other material that had been owned by Sir Clyde Walcott. I saw things from Andy Ganteaume, something owned by Grant.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: They had not yet reached that level but I had no doubt that in due course we would have seen something from...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I came back here and I told the then Minister of Sports, Wes Hall, and in the presence of my colleagues in the Cabinet that we should work at establishing a Caribbean Cricket Museum because we in the Caribbean have more to gain from having a Cricket Museum than almost anybody else. Our exploits in cricket are superior to the exploits of any other group anywhere this century.

We came literally from nothing to the highest point in cricket. We have heroes now which some of our young people had never heard of. There are three or four books published in London by West Indians, one in particular *Heralding the 50 Great West Indian Players*. I think that is what it is called. I cannot remember the title now.

Mr. Chairman, when I have 11-year old boys or 13-year-old boys and I want to give them a gift, that is what I give to them and I have never failed to receive from one of those boys after reading the book expressions of awe. They were unaware.

The newspapers in this country, Sir, I see one is now saying it has a new look but I put it to you, Sir, that not one person in the schools in Barbados now would be able to tell you who Johnny Lucas is. I challenge some of the editors if

they can tell you who Johnny Lucas is. All of us who grew up around that area know that he was the best batsman who never played for the West Indies. Johnny Lucas just could not get into the West Indies team.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No. The talent that was outstripping him was so great that if he was living in New Zealand, Australia, anywhere, he would have been able to play for the national team and he knocked at the door, and knocked at the door and just could not get in.

Barbados had a team that could afford to leave out Frank Worrell and they were still two Ws. Seymour Nurse started playing cricket when he was almost a grandfather.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Nurse did not retire. The Honourable Members are saying that Nurse retired. Nurse did not retire. He left. There is a difference between retiring and leaving. He left.

The only point I am making, Mr. Chairman is that the idea of a West Indian Museum in Barbados - I suggested that we acquire, and the Prime Minister might consider it, the property next door to Kensington Oval. The Government should acquire it. I do not know who owns it but the Government should build there. This way when people come to Barbados from other Commonwealth countries they will get to see Kensington on the one side of Pickwick and on the next side they will be able to see the history of cricket in the West Indies and then it will become a tourist attraction.

I am saying to you, Sir, that the number of people I saw going into the Museum in Melbourne, I could not believe it, the long lines of people waiting to go in and every cricketer everywhere will send something. You could have a bat from Sir Donald Bradman. We are going to wait until he is dead and we cannot get one? 12.40p.m.

I believe that I have made the point. I really feel very strongly about it and I know my colleagues of yesteryear will not mind my saying so. I have asked Wes Hall about now that he is a 'muckety muck' in cricket and I have talked about it elsewhere.

The other thing that I find remarkable is that there are people who believe that unless you have been venerated as a great player that you cannot possibly know anything about cricket. The truth is that all of the Combermerians who played for the West Indies and Barbados were trained by, believe it or not, Bruce St. John...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: They were trained by the late Bruce St. John and then by Ronnie Hughes. We were all in the group together. One of us, or two of us were forced to be out of the cricket group because we belonged to another group and they all used to meet at the same time.

It is remarkable that there are some young men who never played for Barbados whose talents were greater than some of the people who eventually played for Barbados.

I think of a young man called Victor Callender. ..

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am talking about my contemporaries at school. In fact, there is a BCL batsman called Will Clarke whom I am sure Your Honour knows, who was a better opening batsman than Roy Marshall.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He is my constituent. He used to play for the BCL. His name is Will Clarke.

Asides,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying that it is impossible. I do not doubt that he would feel that it is impossible. But no one who saw Will Clarke bat will disagree with me. Will Clarke used to take Carl Mullins on raw ground, without pads. Will Clarke used to receive from Mullins on a ground in Northwest. The ground is about the size of this room and Mullins used to come in from about 50 paces but you could not see him when he kicked off. When you first saw Carl Mullins he would be climbing over a hill and delivering shortly thereafter. And Will Clarke and a fellow call Trasha Cox and there was another one, Elton Cox....-

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: These are people that Your Honour knows. These are people who used to bat in BCL cricket which used to be basically on raw ground in those days, the kinds of wickets that we used to have. That needs to be told to children. Every now and again I read about boys not being interested in cricket anymore. They are not interested in cricket because nobody is telling them about it. Nobody is telling the young people about cricket. Some of the rubbish that is played on Saturday for cricket now....

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You know what they have? They have gear. That is what they have. They have pads for shins, pads for the knees, pads for the hips, pads for the wrists, pads for the chest, pads for the elbows.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The first test! The first test would not have been abandoned in the years when cricket used to be played.

I do not really want to run down the team now but Honourable Members who could remember when cricket used to be played in the Park when Cammie Smith would go to bat, the wicket used to be worse than that sometimes. At Empire they used to put soap on the wicket. "Pampey" Spooner and Hughley Barker and people like that, used to put soap in the water with which to prepare the wicket and that would make the ball come off a good length and come up straight like a short haul jet.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If grown men sit and start to talk about these matters now, even now they can still get excited. Some of the commentators that we have now, Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister should pass a law...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The difference between this House and the United States is that you do not get a 'Sense of the House' Resolution. We should have a 'Sense of the House' Resolution that in order for a person to be a commentator on cricket, he must have at least a certificate in English.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: How can you expect young eleven and twelve-year olds to want to listen to cricket?

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not asking you to agree.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Just to make the point, there is a calypsonian who talks about Grenadians being able to read and spell but not pronounce.

I believe that the gentleman's name is spelt Chanderpaul. I believe that is Chanderpaul. Every commentator, except one calls it Chandropaul. How could it be Chandropaul when it is 'der'. All of them in the Caribbean, except one, mispronounce that man's name.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, I will put in a caveat. Apart from the certificate, they should be required to listen to Sir Everton Weekes at least one hour a day.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am very serious. We used to listen to John Arlott even if there was no cricket playing. No one who heard him describe cricket at Trent Bridge with Weekes and Worrell batting could forget that experience. None of us could forget it. It is that that made us wish to speak the way we do, those of us who can. We aspired to be able to speak like some of those people. Now we get fellows....

I mean it is an embarrassment.

I have nothing against Guyanese but I listened to two or three of them - cricket was coming from Guyana so I assumed they were Guyanese - they did not have the ability to speak in between balls.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In between balls. That is, in between one ball and the next. Mr. Chairman, I was flabbergasted.

I know sometimes we get described as Neanderthals and all kinds of things. But Mr. Chairman, I knew that something* was wrong with the cricket when I was driving along in my car and I opted to move from 790 AM on my dial to 90.7 FM, during a cricket match. There is cricket coming from Guyana and I am listening to cricket and I become so 'fed-up' that I move to 90.7 FM and listen to music for a little while. There is something fundamentally wrong with that.

All I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that this decision is a move in the right direction because it helps to venerate the game. We need to venerate the game. All that we are doing now, I think the young people should get coaching, *etcetera*, but we need to talk about the game.

Barclays Bank through the present President of the Barbados Cricket Association, Tony Marshall, has been doing, from time to time, a series where there is a cricket lecture by somebody at Barclays playing field once every two months or so. I have heard Sir Garfield Sobers, I have heard Sir Clyde Walcott and I have heard Sir Everton Weekes. I think that that is a step in the right direction.

I know that there is a cricket interest in the University and I am not in any way saying that it should be an alternative. I am saying that along with that we also need the

everyday display of what cricket has meant to the Caribbean. Cricket is not only a game for us.

One of the errors that we have made time and time again even when we are arguing is that we do not recognise that cricket for us is like how armaments are to the United States. The United States will display large quantities of armaments. 12.50p.m.

Now you spent some time there, Mr. Chairman, and you have seen the United States will display large quantities of armaments, the latest bomber, and there is a lot of pride when there is a new stealth bomber that the technology is so great, it takes the breath away. That is how they will display their products. We should be displaying our products, as a people, through the experiences of our cricketers and subsequently our other sports people.

The Cubans were able to bring their nationality to a higher level because of the commitment they had to sports and the way they were able to galvanise their people in the interest of sports.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to you because I know you have allowed me to speak in this manner.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Chairman not only played cricket. Our Chairman was an ambassador in the north of England. That is the point. The Honourable Member I am sure you will give me two minutes for this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One minute.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member reminds me that our Chairman played cricket. But the Chairman not only played cricket, the Chairman was an ambassador for Barbados, through his cricketing prowess, in the north of England and all of the professionals from the West Indies did more for relations between England and Barbados than any diplomats could do. It is precisely because we had people like the Chairman up there working for not a lot of money but at least they were able to show that you can earn a living at the sport at which you are good, that other young people started looking to cricket for a living.

Mr. Chairman, I am very happy about the establishment of the West Indies Players' Association in Barbados and I hope that this is the beginning of something big for cricket as a whole in the West Indies. Thank you very much.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, just two very brief points I want to make. The first point is that

I trust that the word would go forth from this Honourable House that the Prime Minister is roughly 95% sure that the cricket would be televised and it is the wishes of the House, 100%, that the cricket be televised.

The second point I wish to make is that I think it is short-sighted not to have an active policy to televise the cricket in the various territories at a time when a test match is being played in the territory, because you want to reach out to the young people. You want to generate interest at a time of maximum interest in cricket and there is no medium through which you can get this across more effectively than through the television.

The final point I want to make, and this point I can make in one minute, is this. Whereas we approve all these necessary supplementaries at this time of the year, I want to urge the Minister of Finance to be very, very cautious about his fiscal position in the coming year because I believe he shares the view, the view which I hold very strongly, that Barbados must not, under any circumstances, go through that cycle that is gone through every 10 years of prosperity and then severe depression triggered by fiscal irresponsibility especially at a time when there are uncertainties in the international environment. My feeling is that this is the first challenge that the Minister of Finance will face and it is a question whether statesmanship would take precedence over politics.

Sir, we may have healthy reserves but let us clearly understand that in these kinds of territories around the Caribbean that those reserves can go in a flash.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That had nothing to do with the reserves. The reserves grew. There was no printing of money in 1986. That is nonsense and when you confuse issues that is the problem.

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, the point I am trying to make is this, that this is a very critical time because this country has virtually nothing to defend its currency apart from an appropriate fiscal position. We have very few assets that we can encash. We cannot go through the encashment of assets again because we have nothing to encash so let us get the record straight. I just want to get two things in the record, the need to televise the test match, and secondly the need for an appropriate posture which has nothing to do with taxation. It has to do with expenditure and an appropriate fiscal position. That is what it has to do with. Thank you very much.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the circumstances, I beg to move that you do now report progress to His Honour, the Speaker.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Does anyone else want to speak to this Head?

Mr. Chairman, in the circumstances so as to tidy up I beg to move that Head 13 do now stand part.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of the Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour Mr. SPEAKER and asked leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 1.00p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: The Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken this Honourable House was in Committee of Supply. To that it will now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. D. CARTER took the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, under Head 15 we are seeking to supplement the contingency of the Tax Office to accommodate the large number of *ex gratia* payments in particular that the Government pays as we become a more litigious society. Sir, we are also seeking to bring into account increased payments of travelling allowances to Members and that is not in anticipation of anything, Sir.

I beg to move that Head 15 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 16 - MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the House will recall that in my last Budgetary Presentation, I indicated that the Government was proposing to convert casual and temporary staff into public officers. We need to establish a special unit to function for a short period of time to enable us to put in place all of the legislation because it will effect a large number of pieces of legislation and regulations pertaining to pensions.

The intention of course, Mr. Chairman, is to make sure that people do not lose any rights that they have as they are being converted to an improved status that would enhance their security of tenure as well as their retirement benefits. Some 3,000 people are intended to be affected positively by this. But what is before the House is a request for funds to enable us to staff and operate a special unit to bring all these matters to account.

A special committee made up of representation of all the social partners has been established and the work toward having the legislation in place to convert the casual and temporary employees into public officers is anticipated to be ready by March and hopefully to be in a position to come to Parliament within the next six weeks.

We are in the interval, Mr. Speaker, of handling the matter administratively. People who are casual employees who would have demitted office as of the 1st of January will be entitled to the benefits of any new provision that will become enforced. They will be advised by the Trade Unions in particular, Sir, to be very careful in the manner in which they approach this legislation. A large number of different pieces of legislation, particularly regulations have to be coordinated. Essentially what is being sought here is permission for monies to be provided to staff and to operate a Special Assignment Unit in the Ministry of the Civil Service that will manage this issue and at the end of that process that Unit will be disbanded.

This position will not be a permanent addition to the expenditure, just to get that special assignment completed.

I beg to move that Head 16 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 19 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 19 stand part and in doing so, Sir, I just want to reiterate that we have finished the wages and salaries. The next step will be to discuss allowances. We have had recommendations from the Management Commission of Parliament. We have had recommendations from the Trade Unions to improve allowances. Other Government Ministries have asked for improved conditions, particularly Foreign Service Officers. We are now going to put all of these together and deal with them in very good faith.

We are now voting the wages and salaries, Mr. Chairman, but I give the House the assurance that that next exercise will look at improvement in other conditions for all persons who draw on the Consolidated Fund. That next exercise is about to impact. I will be reporting to the House in due course and I hope soon, as to the progress that has been made.

With that caveat, I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in moving that Head 34 stand part, I wish to alert this Committee that the amount reflects a number of various things.

Barbados now stands as President of the Forum of Ministers for Latin America and the Caribbean and as such we had to establish a small secretariat to service that office during the course of our tenure as President of that Forum.

The other seminar is by far the larger seminar to the National Cultural Foundation. I guess about half of that was to satisfy a judgment in the case of Mrs. Ram versus the National Cultural Foundation which predates us and which was going on for some time now, over a particular calypso that was written.

Equally, there are also some other elements needed in respect of programming and also in respect of equipment. There is a truck that we need...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir, if I am right the Honourable Member for St. Michael East

was saying that it was his calypso. He wrote a libelous calypso and it cost the Government \$200 000, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir, nowhere in the records of Barbados will it be shown that there was a "J. O. Tudor" who was the author of any calypso.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: No Sir. No part of the record at all. The Honourable Member would know because his name does not appear on many of them, as well.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The other amount, Mr. Chairman, is for some \$11 000 for the Archives and other personal emoluments and that is in relation to allowances. Essentially they would have had to bring in one or two more workers last year. It was a small staff because they had a protracted sick leave among some of the staff. Therefore, these sums just seek to correct some outstanding debts in the National Cultural Foundation.

With those words, Sir, I beg to move that Head 34, as amended, stand part.

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

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I wish to make the general point that the Archives is an important department of Government and an important instrument of culture. I mainly wish to say that whenever the opportunity arises, we should try to give it some additional resources so that it can do more and provide greater service to the general public.

Some of us use the services of the Archives and I think it would help that department and help the users, if they could be provided with an up-to-date photocopying service, Sir. I think this would help. Apparently they have one for the staff. They are not a department that receive, at least, that is their interpretation, that receives revenue and they have nothing in place. Even if they have the equipment, apparently their accounting procedures are not in place. I do not think this is the biggest problem in the world. I am sure that the Minister could consider this and urgently provide them with some facilities there.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I thank the Honourable Member for raising that matter. The Archives, when I met with them in the preparation for Estimates and the Library for that matter, are both about to submit nationalisation programmes in order to more modernise the departments and to make them user friendly.

In so doing I would sincerely hope that access to a photocopier would be part and parcel of that programme. We do recognise that both departments do in fact need

rationalisation and modernisation, particularly given the fact that they are both involved in information collection and dissemination. This being what it is, given what is available in terms of the technology, there perhaps can be a lot more that we can do to make our environment user-friendly and, indeed, to look at the raising of revenue as part and parcel of their remit in future. Thank you. 2.20 p.m.

The question that Head 24 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the amendments to the Resolution have been circulated and I wish to record that the amended Resolution is now in the sum of \$22 948 178.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. G. W. PAYNE, Mr. Chairman reported the passing of one amended Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are a number of Resolutions on...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Some say "there are" and some say "there is".

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Strictly "there is a number". Both are written. I read "there is a number".

Orders Nos. 13. to 20 on the Order Paper are Resolutions which are consequential upon the first Resolution that we did today and Government therefore proposes to take them *seriatim*. Let us take Order No. 13. We have to put each one and the Opposition will choose which one it wishes to debate.

Orders Nos. 13 to 20 were called and passed.
2.30 p.m.

ORDER NO. 10 - POST OFFICE (VALIDATION OF RATES OF POSTAGE) BILL, 1998

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members may be aware from public information that the Post Office is reorganising itself. I would not make a speech on that bit.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, during the Estimates - and I will ask the parliamentary party to allow us to debate the Post Office this year. The Post Office has seldom ever in my experience been debated because it comes at the very end, as Head 50, as an Annex. I will give Honourable Members an opportunity to debate the Post Office.

We are providing for substantial changes, not only in the management of the Post Office, but more particularly, the focus of the Post Office. We need to commercialise the Post Office and give it a large measure of autonomy if it is to be competitive with the new world because the WTO says that by the year 2003 the Post Office must be freed up and deregulation will be the order of the day.

Right now in some European countries a great revolution is taking place. The Germans have moved into Italy and are running the postal system there alongside the Italians. Some have moved into England. We suspect that both the Americans and the British want to get into this region to run the post and that could have severe consequences. All that is going on as part of this business of globalisation and trade liberalisation, so it is necessary that Barbados positions its post in a way to deal with this competition. But I will wish to share the Government's thoughts with Honourable Members during Estimates.

Sir, the Post Office in the last seven years has done a remarkable job. At the same time, there have been little losses every year, not substantial losses, but over the last seven years it has lost about \$6V₂ million. We believe that can be put right by giving the Post Office a new focus, making it more commercial, ensuring that some of its services are known to the public and are used by the public. For example, the Express Mail Service. I am sure that if we have an urgent letter to reach England within the next 36 hours, automatically none of us in here would think of the Post Office. We would instinctively say Federal Express or DHL. The Post Office can do the same job and is going to be doing the same job at substantially less than those private couriers would do it.

We put in a new tracking and tracing system Monday this week to ensure that every piece of mail is traced throughout its journey to its final destination, but there are a lot of other things I would be happy to tell the House about. I hope I get the opportunity during Estimates this year.

From January 1, this year, new postal rates came into effect. The problem was that there was a slight hold-up in having the legislation complete its rounds to take effect from

January 1, because of the intervening Christmas season. In fact, the House was on recess. The rates came into effect and we now have to validate the collection and receipt of those rates by this legislation so before it gets too far out of line, we thought we would bring the Validation Bill at this stage to just validate the collections that have been made since January 1.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I express my own appreciation of the words of the Minister responsible because I believe that the Post Office is not only one of the older institutions in Barbados but it continues to be an important one. It is perhaps good that a look is being taken at its role and we certainly would look forward to the debate during the Estimates.

I would not wish this opportunity to pass though, Sir, without indicating that I believe the problems in the Post Office are not due to the fact that the Post Office may need more controls or more authority. I believe there are problems, issues and directions that can be given right now within the given framework that exists.

I believe too, Sir, that the whole area of modernisation and new directions for that institution are very much in order. I do not believe that we should necessarily look at it in the old ways as an institution which should merely break even but that it should do more than that, because there are always developments that must take place and the Post Office should be in a position to generate those funds to assist in the modernisation of the office.

All of the new technologies that are introduced should not bypass that institution. We have seen the courier services and other devices being introduced in the private sector. There is no reason why the public sector agencies should just disappear and play dead in the presence of private sector agencies and we should take a look particularly at this office to ensure that it is a public sector agency that can do the job with efficiency, meaning without any waste or undue waste. I remember, Sir, indicating that when fax machines came in with the method of delivering information to places near or far that there is no reason why a progressive Post Office should not have been providing some kind of service in that direction. I am not an expert in that area but I believe it is quite feasible that these things should be looked into. 2.40 p.m.

I personally, Sir, do not believe that it should take two days or three days or more for any letter in Barbados

to reach any other part of Barbados. I believe that Barbados is small enough, if we value our communications, that within the same day, if posted by midday, those communications, letters or parcels or whatever should be able to reach from one particular destination in Barbados to another part. We are small enough for that to happen.

I believe that to the extent that we are not doing this and to the extent that communication represents a valuable part of social and economic activity, that we should be moving towards that direction.

Sir, I believe that the Post Office is one of those agencies that has control of a number of vehicles. In the area of moving small packets around Barbados, it should not be impossible, again with some creativity, to develop some moves in that direction to improve that efficiency.

I will limit myself to those comments at this stage. In closing I would like to pay a tribute to the postal staff and the other staff of the institution for the work that they have done through the years.

Thank you very much.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to the Right Honourable gentleman for the contribution that he made and I look forward to having a very informed debate later on this month on this matter, since he is obviously not aware of the new types of delivery. I thought he was bowling a googly there at the end but from January 1, we have classified mail into priority and non-priority mail.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. When the Honourable Member is responding, I would like him to respond to his inability to keep a promise made to this House, that he would provide franking privileges for Members of Parliament. The Honourable Member gave a solemn undertaking on the Floor of this House that he would within a week or two deal with the matter. I have been very patient but the Honourable Member, because of his onerous responsibility elsewhere apparently, has not got around to it. I hope that when he is summing up now that he will be able to tell us specifically when we might expect him to keep this promise.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful for that intervention. The Honourable Member said that Government Business is not a secret in Barbados. He well knows that in the Ministry a paper is being prepared to go to Cabinet about franking privileges, Sir, for Members of Parliament to take effect from April 1.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I cannot announce it because it has not gone to Cabinet yet. He knows that we are working on it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member, like many of his colleagues, attribute powers to me which I know that Your Honour knows that I have not got. I swear, I know of no such Cabinet paper. How would I know about any Cabinet papers that are being prepared by that side?

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I took the point readily when it was made by the Honourable Member last year. A matter like that has to go to Cabinet and I reasonably expect that Cabinet will be liberal and generous in this regard.

As to the other point raised by the Honourable Member, Sir. I am saying that we have reclassified mail into priority and non-priority.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no, no. It does not slow it up. I do not have the details but we have a same day delivery service. It is operable now but you have to post by a particular time. Then there is a next day delivery service. When we come to debate it, I will bring all the information. In fact, we are working on a brochure.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There is only one occasion when that happened in Christ Church when Mr. Fred Goddard's circulars were thrown in a well.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That is a fact and we know the postman who did it, too.

The Honourable Member also finished his speech on a very important point, Sir. The distributions of the postal workers. This has been an area of great concern to me and I have had a lot of work done on it. Most recently, Sir, I brought back from St. Lucia, Mr. Herbert Niles, who is now the Regional Advisor to the Universal Postal Union.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He is a wonderful man, though. He has been an outstanding public officer.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not mind where he is from. He is one public officer, I am not saying the one,

I am saying that he is one public officer who has inspired me. He delivered some papers at international conferences which have been spoken of and written about with such acclaim as to make me feel real proud. He is an excellent Barbadian.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: His name is Herbert Niles. He is an excellent Barbadian. He used to be Postmaster General. He is on secondment to the Regional Unit in St. Lucia. I brought him back for three weeks to help me devise a new career path for postal workers.

When I became Minister responsible for the Post, it was drawn to my attention by Mr. Niles that if you begin in the Post Office as a postman do not care how many qualifications you have, if you have 6 CXCs, 2 'A*' levels, if you have a degree, and you begin as a postman you cannot expect to be promoted for 20 years. That should not be happening in Barbados at the end of this century into the next. I put it to them, you have a sentence of 20 years as a postman, then after that you go to the next grade of postman. We are going to change all of that. I hope the Ministry of Civil Service will look on the proposals favourably and we are looking at the cost implications. What I have seen in the draft Report which was shared with me on Wednesday it is not a lot of money in the context of things. I am not talking even \$1 million to create a new career structure that will allow for speedy mobility through the system where merit can ascend to the top. That Report will be read for Estimates and I will be happy to discuss it in this Chamber, because when we started the modernisation process about 18 months to 2 years ago I had a meeting to which I invited the union and explained to them what we wanted to do. I must say that the Unions have been very helpful, very supportive. 2.50 p.m.

There is only one little issue that is outstanding before we can finalise a new structure for the Post Office and that issue is, what kind of corporate mechanism do we use. At the moment the Post Office is an ordinary civil service department. There is a view that it should be a department like the National Insurance Department. There is another view that we should probably just create it as a statutory board reserving all of the rights of the employees in legislation.

There is another view that perhaps it could be a company in which the Government is the major shareholder. That is a view that I like. It was put to me a couple nights ago that perhaps we should consider the Barbados National Bank model for the Post Office but we have to change its structure and soon. We were leading in this up to about 2 years ago but now Trinidad and Tobago has moved ahead

and restructured. Mind you they have completely privatised for, they say, 3 years in the first instance but I do not recommend that for Barbados. Privatisation for Barbados can imply a loss of jobs. In any restructuring that we do at the Post Office jobs will be preserved. That is very clear. That is within the mandate that has gone to the team which is Management, Union and Workers.

St. Lucia is moving in that direction. Suriname and Grenada have even passed new legislation. As I say that is the one little issue that we have to decide, the kind of organism that the Post Office will be in the future. But, Sir, I would be happy to discuss these matters in greater detail at Estimates. With those words, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee without amendment and His Honour, Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Post Office (Validation of Rates of Postage) Act, 1998.

ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING OF LAND AT LOWER BURNEYS, ST. MICHAEL IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks to vest 12.60 hectares of land at Lower Burneys in the National Housing Corporation. We have already had a full debate on this Resolution when this property was acquired by Government and this is the Resolution seeking to vest the land in the Crown. I would just briefly like to say that it is proposed that we would be able to have

an additional 271 lots in this area for those low income persons in St. Michael who have written to the National Housing Corporation seeking house spots, also those persons who have been dislocated as a result of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. In addition it is hoped that we would be able to move some of those residents who have had drainage problems in Murphy's Pasture, Ellis Village in the Hall's Road area and those who live in the Constitution Road area.

It is hoped, Mr. Speaker, that we would be able to accommodate about 45 such persons. We have already made provision for the use of part of this land by a church in the area. With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am particularly happy that I have been given an opportunity to speak, Sir, on this matter in relation to the acquisition of land in Lower Burneys, St. Michael.

Sir, I hope you will bear with me because right now I am under tremendous pain in my back, that is why I am in this awkward position, but that does not stop me, Sir, from getting involved in this debate.

Now, Sir, as I said, I am happy, but there are a few things I would like to point out to the Minister because the Minister himself, in this Honourable Chamber, made mention that if any Members of Parliament have any land available within their constituencies they should let him know and he would act on it. 3.00 p.m.

I am very happy, Sir, that I have informed the Honourable Member from St. Andrew about this land and I am happy to see that now he is acting on it. But I have been promised, Sir, at the same time that at least I will be given a large or sizeable portion of spots to facilitate those residents from Haggatt Hall and also Lower Burney who have made several applications to the Ministry of Housing and Lands and also to the National Housing Corporation. I am hoping that in good faith the Minister will keep his word on that, Sir, which I have no doubts that he will.

In addition, Sir, I am also happy that the Church in the area that was supposed to set up in Haggatt Hall, he has informed me by letter that they will be setting up, when the land becomes available in Lower Burneys.

Sir, I know the land very well and I am particularly happy too for the residents of Murphy's Pasture. When we move all of these people and resite them in Lower Burneys, I am hoping that the social amenities will be put in place. Like for instance a playing field and a community centre as time goes on, to facilitate them and make them a lot happier up there in Lower Burneys.

The history of Pinelands would have shown that when these facilities were not in place there was a lot of crime and turmoil within the area. I am saying that in their planning at the Ministry of Housing and Lands that also they look at the possibility of putting a community centre and playing field in this area. Presently there is land in Lower Burneys. I know the area very well.

In addition, Sir, there are a lot of young people, particularly in Haggatt Hall and the same Lower Burneys, Mount Friendship and Pinelands who want to improve their lot. I am hoping that consideration not only is given to these, but to young people in general who want to improve their lot, also to make some of this land available to them.

Sir, I have a problem with a development that I see occurring in this country. The problem is that some people, I think there are about 25 to 30 of them, have been served with notices of eviction by their landlords. After they have exhausted the whole procedure of going through the court, the final thing that happens is that the Marshals come and take down their houses and put them next to the road and eventually, it is put on a garbage site.

I am saying, Sir, that we have to put a policy in place to stop this. We should have emergency house spots, not only for these people, but also for fire victims and then on a wider spectrum, because I heard the Prime Minister talking about squatting and they are not going to tolerate that much longer, Sir.

The fact is that squatting is a larger problem, as I keep saying, that we have to investigate very seriously. I think the problem is that we need to have the land available so that those people would not suffer as Shakespeare would say, "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" and therefore be placed in an area and make their lives a lot more comfortable. I am totally against any poor person in Barbados, having worked all their lives, acquired their houses, and in the final analysis have them put on a dump heap.

I think we, as caring politicians and caring technocrats in this country, Sir, should take up this issue and we have to deal with it. It hurts and grieves me to know that recently in my constituency, three people's houses were placed next to the road and then eventually was moved to a dump and these people worked all their lives to get these houses. I am saying that we have to be more caring and more understanding in this approach am saying that we, as the technocrats and the decision makers and the law makers of this country, Sir, have to examine this and put an end to it.

Again, Sir, as I said, I am happy that the land in Lower Burneys has come on stream and I am saying that

I hope the Minister keeps his word and gives active consideration to those residents that live in Lower Burneys and Haggatt Hall particularly, for house spots. Also, I am warning that when we go about it, Sir, we must put those amenities in place. Particularly we must have a little playing field up for them and a pavilion.

I will use this occasion, Sir, to formally welcome those people from Murphy's Pasture. I would also like to know that in the first phase of the project, at least we get four or five house spots for those residents from Lower Burneys and Haggatt Hall.

With those few words, Sir, I want to thank you and this Honourable Chamber for listening to me.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, whenever I hear about land being made available for housing, I am happy and very supportive. The matter of house spots is perhaps the biggest one of concern to us who have to be persuaded daily that people need somewhere to place their houses.

I know that there is an emphasis these days on the catch phrase, "poverty alleviation" and some speak of "poverty eradication". But from my experience, Sir, there are two areas in which poverty can be clearly seen. The first one is with jobs and the second one is with housing. So that when we look at having land allocated for housing, I think we are on the right track and perhaps we need to pursue that a little more vigorously.

Sir, we have a number of situations where people are very desperate for somewhere to put a house. They are so desperate because they have been applying to the National Housing Corporation, some for 10 years, some for 20 years and some maybe for as long as 30 years. We have a situation where people have to reside in their mothers' homes, their fathers' homes until they have their own generation.

The question of allocation of land for house spots cannot be lightly looked at. I therefore, Sir, have to empathise with persons who, when they see some kind of land available might want to look at it very seriously and might be tempted when great frustration hits them, because they just cannot find a piece of land to put a house on, nor can they find a house. They cannot even find a housing unit. They cannot find a proper house to rent. There is no land available.

Sir, we have a church in Christ Church where the people have been looking for land for a few months, after they have been put alongside the road. The Church is now rotting there, but they just cannot find land to put this Church on. I am saying that the availability of land for any kind of

housing is a serious matter and it needs to be addressed. I think perhaps this should be our number one priority.
3.10p.m.

I wish to address specifically the case of those eager residents in the area of Fairy Valley who on seeing that new tenantry road being built there, ran as if there was gold to get it. Everybody ran to secure a little piece to put down some blocks. Some were a little more adventurous and they went a little further than that. I am not saying that we should condone the breaking of the law nor of necessary regulation, but what I am saying is that we need to look at mechanisms by which people who live in areas where this land is being made available should be able to have some kind of preference so that they will be close to their families where there is this extended family network.

I want to appeal in the case of Fairy Valley that those persons who have been so eager and have gone and put their blocks there, and their houses, that some mercy be extended to them and that when consideration is being given to the allocation of that land that people do not get upset and say that they had no right going there and say, "too bad for you," and bring other people. I am hoping that these people be given due consideration when the allocation of the land becomes available. I hope that this will be soon because there are a number of people who are desperate for house spots in that area of Christ Church and I know from the numerous letters I have sent to the National Housing Corporation.

I do not know how many people have received house spots but I know of only one person who has received a house spot out of those numerous letters that I have been sending to the National Housing Corporation, and I am hoping that good sense will prevail, in that justice will be tempered with mercy in that case. Thank you, Sir.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very glad of the opportunity to bring clarity to this burning issue of what has occurred at Fairy Valley in Christ Church. Fairy Valley is an area of land in Barbados which has been under Government ownership for over 30 years because it is part of the area on which Grantley Adams International Airport was built. When I was Minister of Civil Aviation and the Grantley Adams Airport was extended it was recognised that as a result of the extension of the airport a number of residents in the nearby areas would be affected, particularly those who lived in what was known as the flight path.

We, ourselves, in our time, between 1976 and 1986, carried out a number of surveys of the areas affected and the residents and it was as a result of that that the development of a large part of Parish Land was regularised

and improved, including the building of the magnificent playing facilities at Parish Land for all of the residents in that area.

It was also our hope that the area of the land lying between the sea and the road that takes one to the Light Airplane Club and Paragon would have been developed for use primarily of small scale agriculture where it was suitable and also for the resiting of those people who were affected by the rules relating to the flight path. As a matter of fact, in that area of Fairy Valley it was always envisaged that the 10 or 12 houses which were on the airport side of the Fairy Valley road would be moved to the other side and that that tenantry which was Fairy Valley, that part of it which was not used for agriculture, would be developed.

What has happened is that despite the valiant efforts of the Other Side some 8 or 10 years have elapsed and that tenantry road was not built. The second extension of the Grantley Adams International Airport was designed and it became an acute problem as to what to do with the people who were going to be affected in the Thyme Bottom flight path area. A number of the people voluntarily moved out but there are some 50 or 60 people who did not move out.

This Government started to build the road in Fairy Valley Tenantry. A careful census was taken as to those who were affected at Thyme Bottom and of those people who had rights but, as has been said, there were some people who decided in their minds that they were going to anticipate the allocation of the house spots and a number of them - 1 do not know the number - started to stake out their territory.

As a matter of fact, it is said that one family staked out 8 spots and put up a sign Private Land and even stopped the contractor, Rayside Group, from bringing the road in accordance with how it was planned.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: On a point of order, the Honourable Member is correct in stating that the persons from Thyme Bottom who anticipated that they were supposed to be moved took the land up in Fairy Valley because the people from Thyme Bottom knew that they were allocated spots in Leadvale and I suspect he may be speaking of others in the Fairy Valley area who are just north of Wilcox Road who have been recently told that they have to move. It may be some of those, I am not sure but not the persons from Thyme Bottom area.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I said a number of people in the area staked out spots and put up a sign. I saw it with my own two eyes and I will tell you how the site visit occurred. Consequent upon the assumption of responsibility by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and myself for

the Members of the Labour Party in that area, a number of people came to my constituency office and told me what was going on. Some even rang me from America who are living in the area saying that they cannot get their rights because other people started to stake out their spots.

So I went there and I saw there was a fair amount of confusion. I, therefore, along with the Honourable Member for Christ Church West decided that we were going to bring the matter to the attention of the Ministry of Housing and Lands because I know the area very well. That is an area that in 1966 there were 100 votes and when the box was counted 98 voted and I got 97.

Therefore we went on a visit and it was made clear - and this is the point that I think should be made clear - that the people who had a prior right to those spots were the people who were tenants of the plantation, because Government regarded itself as being bound by the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

Secondly, there were people who were objecting to move from Thyme Bottom to Leadvale because they had family there. There was a number of people from Thyme Bottom who had family in Fairy Valley and those of us who know the place before the airport was extended know that that is all one community.

The airport was not extended right down to Thyme Bottom. It was all one community. They were the second people who had priority.

Luckily for everybody, provided those who now understand that they cannot stop the contractor from carrying out the road in accordance with the plans that have been laid out, a survey will show that there are enough house spots to satisfy the demands of everybody within that priority. The area has to be properly developed, however, and those people who have developed without reference to a plan will obviously have to conform to the plan. 3.20p.m.

The decision was also taken that a parallel road could be built and a whole new set of spots could be opened up because the land is sufficiently deep that you can have a group of spots overlooking the sea and these spots will back each other. This is not a matter in any way of the Government trying to use a big stick against people who have gone on the land and are trying to find a house spot there.

I would like to see, myself, the whole area developed because I have been calling for the development of that whole area like Parish Land and there will be

enough house spots for all, but priority must be given to people who have prior rights to those who have broken the law and gone on the land without permission and that is all. It is a rational attempt to bring ...

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: If you had not given back to the owners Six Men's it would have had the development scheme and both the same owners and the others would have been able to have their interest reconciled. Six Men's is one of those areas like Oistins. You cannot give everybody an individual lot of land.

They have built flat so you must be man enough to educate the people that if they live in that area and want to have a piece of land and they do not want to move out of the area they have to live in a flat. That is what you have to do. I tell the people in Oistins so all the time because everybody would like to live in Scarborough and they cannot.

The basic position with Fairy Valley is that as a result of a visit of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Housing and everybody, a rational plan is being developed and everybody will be able to be satisfied, but people must not attempt to stop the development which has been laid out.

Now the Town Planner and all of them were present. The instructions were very clear so I hope that the issue will not become bigger than it should be because the only issue there is the allocation of the land. The priorities have been settled and the Government has committed itself to the expansion of the area. I certainly look forward to many more people looking after the interests of those people who have priorities to settle being able to have house spots up there because the land is available.

Thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is always rather interesting to listen to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South because sometimes I wonder if he takes a peek at my notes. It is clear to me that the whole housing policy of the Barbados Labour Party's Government is in confusion and that is, you have a situation where you seem to have one policy for the north of Barbados, and I need not identify a particular area in the north right now, and one policy for the south of Barbados where we have two separate situations where people seem to have been given permission to squat in the north but they cannot do the same thing in the south of the country. What is regrettable, Sir, is that in the north of the island the land is owned by a private person and in the south of the island the land is owned by Government. We need to find out what is the housing policy of the

Government because it is clear to me that there is a big conflict in the housing policy of the Government.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. First of all, no Honourable Member has ever encouraged squatting in the north whether it is Government land or private land.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, that cannot be a point of order because I have never accused anybody of encouraging

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is grossly misleading the House. The Town Planner has, as recently as last month, served enforcement notices on people who are squatting at Six Men's. May I also say, Sir, that from 1987 I have been writing the Town Planner urging him to put enforcement notices on people who have been seizing private land and squatting on other people's land creating a difficulty for public health, putting the squatters in a position where they cannot get electricity nor telephone services. I have heard coming from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that there is a dual policy where we are condoning and supporting squatting in the north on private land. That is not true and nobody has fought against that more than I have, to the point where I have said that people who have squatted should not expect to have the same right as people who enjoy rights under tenantry legislation. There is no policy on the part of this Government applicable to the north that is encouraging people to squat.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, we need to have a clear policy because it is very important in this country that we get clear policies. I want to draw another example, Sir. It is also clear to me that we need as a Parliament to let poor people know if they have a right to have a share of land in this country. I have already spoken of a situation where we, as parliamentarians, come to this Assembly and we are quite prepared to give back land to the rich and famous in this country and it is extremely difficult for a poor man to get a small piece of land in this country.

You have heard me, Sir, on many occasions ask this Parliament to agree to a policy where the Government of the day, being the largest land owner in this country, should set a policy in place where poor people can feel they have a right and a claim to a piece of land in this country. For months I have said so on the Floor of this Assembly and nothing has been done about it yet there are people who come to this country with large investments and they are given concessions.

I want to say to this Parliament that if the Government of the day decides that they are going to

put in the necessary amenities in the land they have, and if they sell the poor people, which they have right to, and let me pause here - I want the parliamentarians of this Assembly to understand that the poor people out there who are asking for land are the people who came here and worked in the fields hard, hard, hard and most of them their grandparents and great grandparents were never fairly compensated for the work they have done so they are not begging us as Parliamentarians for a piece of this land. Their foreparents worked hard and they have a right to own a piece of Barbados.

It is regrettable that in a country like this anybody can come here and own land and poor people who have sweated in the fields cannot tell anybody that they have the right to own a piece of this cake. I am saying that sometimes we, as Parliamentarians, need to stand up and be counted. It is not the outsiders or the investor who can come here and spend \$40 million, it is we, as Parliamentarians, that are causing it to the same poor people and we need to take a stand. That is why I am calling on the Government because it is the same poor people who during the crisis in the 90s had to suffer to make sure that this country got back on its footing.

It is the same poor people who forked out their money and paid VAT to give us a surplus at the level we have today and then you are telling me that we cannot allocate some of that money to make sure that we put in the necessary amenities in the land that belongs to them anyhow and sell them at the cost of the land without the amenities. What is so wrong with that, Sir? Is it because we can identify with them, Sir? I say, that we need to stop and start thinking because there is to come a time in this country where those same people are going to start seeing us as the enemy. We have to ask ourselves if we would be happy to live like that. You can play with a man long enough but sometimes that man gets angry. 3.30 p.m.

I am saying, Sir, if poor people continue in this country to see people fly in here by jet and own the best land and they cannot get a house spot, something will happen. And I will do my best to make sure that it does not happen. I am calling on this Assembly to stand up and be counted because the time is ripe and if we do not do it soon, Sir, there won't be a single plantation in this country that would not be foreign owned. Because everyday Sir, there is a demand for another plantation and the price is getting higher and higher. Even the churches now find themselves in a situation where they have to sell their property. Not that there is anything wrong with the churches selling their property.

I am saying that we, as Parliamentarians, need to stop and we need to find out what we are going to do with that surplus of money from VAT. We need to know how those poor people that line up at National Housing Corporation

twice per week, because they go one day and then they have to come back another day just to get a house spot in this country...

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know that you are aware because once you are a Parliamentary Representative in this country, you must know that there are poor people who turn up at National Housing Corporation twice a week to be turned around. Let me tell you something, Sir, there are our brothers and sisters and we must have a conscience and we must be prepared to make a decision.

I do not know how long those people will continue to do it. I do not know how long but I am saying that we as Parliamentarians, we are creating problems for ourselves and we are going to find them rather difficult to solve.

I do not want to sound like a prophet but any time that you have a situation where too few can appear to have everything they want and the masses have to suffer, something is wrong. A man who has given to you, you should never turn your back on him. We as Parliamentarians should not be doing that. Every time we call on those people they have responded to us and now that they are calling on us, it appears that we are not responding to those people. I think that it is time that we take heed.

I am saying that I do not know of anybody on this side who could feel happy, Sir. To know that every time he goes to his constituency office for anything that somebody can ring them and tell them that they need a house spot or they want someplace to rent.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Because they are working it does not mean that they can afford to build a house. That is why the Honourable Member for St. John agrees with me that the land should be given to them free so that they can build their own houses.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: If they are working then you should agree with the policy that I have enunciated.

It is time that we empower those people because let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, I have Witnessed that in the 90s when this country was in a crisis, it was not those people who turned their backs on this country. It was the so-called people who had the money, who took the money out of the country and left but those same people remained and they ploughed the fields.

I saw an interesting situation, Sir, where even civil servants turned to the fields and the piece of land they

had at the back of their houses. We saw the results and the time is ripe for us to look after the interests of the poor.

We have a problem in this country, Sir, sometimes because some of us get up, we feel that we need not stop and look down. We feel that we can always look up and it is wrong. We need to reflect and look back sometimes so that we can understand and appreciate the feelings of those people behind us. That is a problem that is happening in this country.

Let me give you a good example of what I am talking about. You cannot get a contractor now to do any work for a small house owner because he feels that he can only do work for the large house owners. The small man again must suffer. I am saying, Sir, that the time is ripe and we need to re-focus.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the last Honourable Member who has spoken behaved as though we were in Government for the last 30 years and he is not allowing the John Public to believe and to know that we came to office less than four years ago.

It is important to know, Mr. Speaker, that over the last 20 years whenever the Barbados Labour Party was in power that we not only had strong land policies but we tried in every way to make sure Barbadians were able to own part and parcel of this country.

Do you realise, Mr. Speaker, that in last Administration between 1986 and 1994, the Government of the day, the DLP Administration acquired less than 50 acres of land for people in this country.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: For house spots. Within three short years, this Administration now has a land bank and by the end of this financial year, we will be able to boast that we have more than 4 000 lots which will be made available over a period of time. Mr. Speaker, it is erroneous to suggest that we are not providing lots for poor people.

The Honourable Member has been constantly making the public to believe that Barbadians are not given opportunity to buy land whereas foreigners are buying. It is really erroneous because the records have shown that less than 10% of Barbados is really owned by foreigners.

When we came to office, Mr. Speaker, a number of people had applied for land. I am aware and all Honourable

Members are aware of the need for house spots. These things have to be done in a systematic way. The acquisition has to be done, the surveying has to be done and then you have to put in the sites and services. All these things are being done.

The other thing that the Honourable Member fails to understand is this. That no previous Government has ever put the amount of money into housing as we have today.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because to give the House the impression that any particular Government has spent so much money to build 24 houses is to give the impression that Government is squandering funds, Sir. I will not allow it to be said in this house.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is here to make fun but the records are there. This Honourable House has guaranteed over \$30 million for housing within the last year. 3.40p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member must not mislead himself. The Honourable Member is misleading this House and misleading himself. That the Government rrtey have guaranteed \$30 million has nothing to do with the amount spent for housing. The Honourable Member must be aware of the 7 or 8 housing estates that have been created and I think the Honourable Member's intentions are reasonable. He is saying that the Government has committed ...

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am saying we have passed in this Honourable House and we have guaranteed \$30 million to put at the disposal of the National Housing Corporation to develop housing in Barbados and over the next year or two a number of lots will be made available for poor people in Barbados. In no year in the DLP administration were they able to create more than 150 lots.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, the Honourable Member, as I recall, before he became a Parliamentary Secretary, was a teacher and he must be familiar with the poem of the Ancient Mariner of which there is a line which goes, "water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink". The plans for housing have been myriad in this House over time with all governments but the people want some houses, not a lot of talk.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We have created lots, Mr. Speaker, and I am happy that within this year's programme

more lots will be created for the poor people. The Tenancies Freehold Purchase programme is also on stream and Honourable Members should be aware of this. It is important that Honourable Members realise that squatting is illegal whether it is in the North or in the South, the East or the West and it is unfair for a man to wait a number of years to acquire land and then for another, as soon as he sees the Government put in a road, to come and squat. Then you have other Honourable Members on the front page of a paper appearing as though they are agreeing with this type of squatting. It is unfair.

Mr. SPEAKER: On what do you rise, Sir?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: On a point of order. We have not seen any person on the front part of any paper so we do not want the Honourable Member to mislead this House about anyone on the front page of any paper.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister is on record in this House as calling on the Town Planning Department to use their authority to stop the squatting in Six Men's. I am sure Honourable Members in the Christ Church area also went to Fairy Valley and begged the residents in that area not to squat. There is land enough for everyone if they comply with the law and how is it that you are going to put up a house without Town Planning permission? You are not going to get water or electricity. You do not know where the roads will come. It is unfair. We have a desperate situation in Barbados for house spots. The demand is there and we have created a situation where enough land will be provided and I have said before ...

Aside.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: When we came to office in 1994 there was no more land. We found approximately 90 house spots at Haggatt Hall. So far we have created a situation in this country where there are over 230 lots at Cutting Road, Lower Burneys, lots available in the North, in the South, as well as in the centre of this country.

I also understand that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy keeps talking about lots for poor people. I understand ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just one minute, please. Let us hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy keeps talking about lots for poor people, but I understand there is a St. Elmo Development in St. Lucy taking place where lots are being sold at \$10 a square foot. Is that for poor people?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir, I know of no land in St. Lucy that is being sold at \$ 10 a square foot. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, a friend of mine called the developer and he was told the lots are being sold in the vicinity of \$10 a square foot.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, it is clear, Sir, that the Honourable Member is misleading the House because if the person called the developer the person could not qualify because they were not from St. Lucy.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is not only misleading the House, he is obviously misleading himself because...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, Sir, you are responding?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, Sir, on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: You seem to know a lot about this St. Elmo Terrace.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I could tell you everything, Sir. There is only one St. Elmo in St. Lucy. The Honourable Member, Sir, is misleading the House because he said 2 things, Sir:

(1) that the land is being sold at \$10 a square foot and

(2) there is no Town Planning permission.

This is a very serious charge because it implies that somebody is committing a criminal act.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, could you correct us and let us move on please?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am asking the Honourable Member to withdraw those remarks through you, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, you know that I cannot say the Honourable Member is lying, so for me to say, Sir, that it is not true is to admit that he is lying which I am not allowed to do, but I am categorically denying that land is being sold at St. Elmo's Terrace in St. Lucy at \$10 a square foot or land is being sold without Town and Country Planning permission so I would like him to withdraw his remarks.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, what was told to me. A client told me that lands are being sold at \$10 a square foot. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the land in St. Lucy is not being sold to any poor person so the Honourable Member must not come in here and make people believe that he is any champion for the poor people.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because if a labourer is not a poor person, if a person who works as a shop assistant at Courts is not a poor person and if those people were not given rights above people who were prepared to pay in US, if they are not poor people and if the developer refused to sell land to a doctor and sold the land to poor people at a lower price, if there is not something good in that developer then something is wrong with the other people.

Mr. SPEAKER: You seem to know a lot about the developer.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we are concerned though about the number of people who need spots and I am sure that all Honourable Members are aware that the Minister and the Ministry have been looking across Barbados to try to solve the problem. 3.50p.m.

I want to give the House this assurance that very soon the problem of the shortage of house spots will be solved; it will be a thing of the past.

I thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is giving the impression that the house spots would be given to the poor people for the price I suggested. I am saying, Sir, that the Government cannot be a real estate agent.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, it has become evident by now that we on this Side are supporting the Resolution at present before the House. I feel obliged to take to my feet to respond to a myth which has assumed some permanence in this House over the record of the Democratic Labour Party between 1986 and 1994 in the area of housing.

In the last three years, I have heard Honourable Members on that Side of the House repeat the allegation that the Democratic Labour Party's record on low income housing and house spots and that kind of thing was catastrophic. The Honourable Member is now saying, "a business"

The Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party which is already a document of the House, sets out the achievements of the Party between 1991 and 1994 in the area of housing. The record shows you.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition has already indicated to this House that that document that he is reading from is not part of a social contract with the people of Barbados. Therefore, he has no moral right to read from that document, Mr. Speaker.

Aside.

Mr. F. J. STUART: I will continue, Mr. Speaker. I am reading from page 29 of the Party's Manifesto under the caption, "Achievements 1991-1994"

"The sector experienced some decline between 1991/1994 but we made significant achievements during the period including

- satisfying between 70% and 80% of need in the sector between 1988 and 1993.
- An increase in the quality of housing with masonry constructions increasing.
- The mortgage interest rates which showed an initial increase now stands at 8 per cent.
- A creditable performance by the National Housing Corporation which completed 44 relocations, 164 new rental units, 38 houses through joint ventures, sale of 681 lots through the sites and services programme, the sale of 411 properties, developed 480 lots, the rental accommodation of 482 families and 82 general workers' loans.
- Rationalization of the operations of the National Housing Corporation with a notable increase in the sale of single units.
- Completion of infrastructural development work on the Glebe Development Project.
- Conveyed 2,786 lots to tenants under the Plantation Tenancies Programme.
- Disbursed BDS\$4.8 million under the Housing Credit Fund.

Asides.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Now if the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is saying that this is not a social contract, I suppose the Government's White Paper is.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. I never said that it is not part of a social contract with the people of Barbados. It is the Leader of the Opposition. His Leader made that statement. I did not make that statement. I was reminding him of that statement.

Aside.

Mr. F. J. STUART: I resume, Mr. Speaker. The Government's White Paper which received the approval, I suspect, of the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, which is the same as the Green Paper, there is no distinction, this I want to believe is a social contract.

This document, Mr. Speaker, at page 6 reviews the record of Government in housing between 1970 and 1990. Paragraph two states as follows:

"The above pattern fairly matches information obtained from continuous monitoring of the housing starts, using the number of water connections for building services as an indicator but masks the actual trend in construction. While the annual average here is 931 units the trend is indeed an increasing one, particularly for the period up to 1989 when the highest level of construction starts was observed."

In 1989, Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party was in power and for the period between 1970 and 1990, 1989 is held up as the record year. I hope that after this presentation of evidence, that the Barbados Labour Party will stop the slandering against the Democratic Labour Party that we had no record in housing between 1983 and 1994.

The facts speak with their own eloquence.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the record that was quoted by the Honourable Member has to be properly analysed, because a housing start does not mean that it is Government's housing start. It is a housing start of total Barbados - private and public. You cannot say that it is the Democratic Labour Party that built those houses because at the end of this year you will see that the records of 1989 will be surpassed.

Mr. F. J. STUART: The Honourable Members on the Other Side have been giving the impression that nothing was happening in housing between 1986 and 1994. That is not true. Housing construction reached record levels in the year 1989. The record so shows. Our achievements between 1991 and 1994 speak with great and moving eloquence. The records show that whether you are talking about disbursement under the Housing Credit Fund or whether you are talking about conveying lots under the Tenancies

Freehold Purchase Act the Democratic Labour Party's record is creditable. I am not going to answer this any more. Honourable Members can continue to immerse themselves in myths. The facts speak for themselves.

Before I take my seat, Mr. Speaker, I just want to refer to a statement made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East in his speech in which he referred to the fact that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew had invited Members of Parliament to indicate areas of land in their constituencies which might be acquired for housing purposes. Now that is a laudable approach to the solution of the housing problem. But what the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has never done, is to let the House know what is the magnitude of the problem which he is trying to solve.

We all know that we are battered at our constituency offices and elsewhere about houses and house spots on a weekly basis. But it would help me certainly, to know how many applications from the constituency of St. Philip South for example, are outstanding at the National Housing Corporation. If I am armed with that knowledge, when I recommend that a particular area be acquired for house spots, housing and that kind of thing, I would expect that the persons who would have the first claim on those spots, would be constituents from St. Philip South. It is going to make no sense for any Honourable Member in this House to indicate... or for the parish of St. Philip, because enlightened sociology of housing would aim at keeping communities together, rather than breaking them up.

Therefore I would want the Honourable Member for St. Andrew to let the House know at sometime in the near future what is the size of the problem he is trying to solve and if possible, give a parish breakdown of applications outstanding at the National Housing Corporation so that when Members of Parliament identify areas of land for acquisition they would have a reasonable certainty that the pressing housing needs of their constituents are going to be given priority.

It was lamentable that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East had to make the point that he hopes that he gets a certain amount for his constituents while welcoming people from other parts of Barbados. We know the problems are national in scope and that everybody has to be looked after; but if a Member of Parliament in his constituency identifies an area of land for acquisition for housing purposes and for house spots, justice demands, it seems to me, that his constituents be given first option. That is the only point that I want to make. 4.00 p.m.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members on that Side will have ample time during the

Estimates to deal with this particular matter of housing. We are dealing with a Resolution pertaining to Lower Burney and it would seem as though we have stretched the net fairly far and wide. It is obvious when we listen to the contributions from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that he is obviously lauding the policy of this Administration, certainly in ensuring that the poor people that he speaks about are given the opportunity once and for all of at least owning a small parcel of land.

What we' have been doing, Mr. Speaker, is acquiring land not just in St. Andrew or St. James or Christ Church. We have been acquiring land all over Barbados in order that people would be able to get a house spot for purchase or for rent.

In our Manifesto when we spoke to this whole subject of making housing more affordable we were not thinking in terms simply of the amount of terrace units that we put up. You have to look at the total picture of housing since we came into office. You have to look at what you have to do when you make an acquisition with respect to a certain parcel of land, what has to be done. I am glad to hear the Honourable Member say that we have made a lot of applications for acquisitions throughout the island and they have not seen a house here or there.

You have to involve the land surveyor. You have to involve the officers in the Ministry of Housing. You have to deal with road profiles. You have to apply to the Chief Town Planner. You have to go to tender for the roads. All of this has taken time. We have made acquisitions throughout the length and breadth of this island and we have wasted no time in making the application to the Chief Town Planner and in going out to tender to make sure that the roads are in. This is a process that we would not be able to conclude in two or three years.

It is very convenient that the Honourable Member cited a portion of scripture that suited his purpose, but the White Paper spoke to these issues and we specifically stated in the White Paper that this is a 10-year programme that we are dealing with and hopefully, after the people of Barbados give us the opportunity, after the next election, we will be able to implement Phase 4 of that project.

What has happened is that the Honourable Members on that Side would like to sidestep the issue in looking at the amount of applications to National Housing Corporation by reference to constituencies. Mr. Speaker, the problem here is not the amount of applications. The issue is what this Administration has done with those applications. You had the same number of applications during the last Administration but they did not seek to set about a policy and I am glad that the Honourable Member could quote from a White Paper on Housing.

If we had that White Paper on Housing, if we had those acquisitions completed and the Town Planning permissions finished, the road profiles had gone out to tender, even though we were under structural adjustment, we would have been able to implement the programme and, God forbid, if they get the opportunity after the next election, they will be able to implement the programme within months. It is all part of a whole programme.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. This House, Sir, is being misled. When we built Eden Lodge and the large quantity of houses in this country we did not just get an aeroplane and drop them there. We went through the same processes. The Honourable Member is making excuses about the procedures.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: My point of order is that he is misleading the House, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot make a speech now.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have to do our acquisitions and the acquisitions are not even half of it. We have a series of acquisitions to do and this is why I am also pleased that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East - I do not know if it is in contravention of the policy on that Side not to cooperate with the Division of Housing and the Ministry of Housing and the Minister of Housing in identifying house spots because the Honourable Member...

Mr. F. J. STUART: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. No Honourable Member on this Side of the House is failing or refusing to cooperate with the Ministry of Housing. The Ministry of Housing has the fullest cooperation of every single Honourable Member on this Side of the House. What we are saying is that we need to know what is the size of the problem with which you are trying to deal. Once we know the size of the problem we can better respond and assist and cooperate as you wish.

Secondly, the period between 1994 and 1997 accounts for 3 years. The period between 1991 and 1994 also accounts for 3 years and what is pardonable in one period is also pardonable in the other.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I have already covered that point Mr. Speaker, with respect to the applications and the problem and what they have done. They are looking at it in terms of applications to National Housing Corporation rather than what they have done to address the problem. As I was saying, because of the size of the programme we

have got to complete our applications before we can actually complete the programme. It will not be a programme that we will be able to complete in 5 years.

With respect to the point that the Honourable Member spoke about of identifying a parcel of land in a particular area, that he would want to be sure that the people in that particular area would be able to obtain housing. You cannot say the parish because if you say the parish you are looking at the constituencies of Honourable Members who are covered by 4 or 5 parishes. My constituency is 5 parishes. So you cannot look at the parish.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is deeper than that and this is why Honourable Members are admitting that they are not fully seised.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying that the constituency of St. Andrew comprises 5 parishes. I do not believe that the Honourable Member wishes to mislead the House. The Honourable Member should try and keep his language within reason.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member knows that there are 5 parishes within the constituency of St. Andrew. How he chooses to interpret that is a matter entirely for him.

Mr. Speaker, it is fairly obvious that they have not been able to identify the problem in housing and they are somewhat embarrassed by it because when you acquire land in a particular area you have to deal with people who have been dislocated as a result of the amendment which they made to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and sometimes you have people involved in their constituencies who want to live in an area which is in another parish.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East spoke of problems of people who had been evicted, where there is no statutory obligation on the part of Government. Because there is no statutory obligation on the part of Government it does not mean that Government does not have the obligation to intervene because of the social responsibility of Government. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East spoke to the issue of people's houses being placed on the garbage dump. 4.10p.m.

We cannot interfere with situations like that. That is a legal process and it is unfortunate that we have reached a stage where landlords can legally do things like that. These lots that are being acquired are also being acquired to satisfy

that need so you cannot say that simply because a spot of land has been acquired in the constituency of St. Philip North and there is a problem in St. John that you cannot accommodate that person. If you are saying that you have identified a spot and you have a right to the majority of house lots in that particular area well then we would not be able to satisfy the need of those people in Murphy's Pasture, Ellis Village, Constitution Road...

Mr. F. J. STUART: On a point of order, Sir. The point which I have been trying to make but which the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has clearly not grasped is that the object of any enlightened housing policy must be to keep communities together and if land is acquired for housing in a particular constituency, wisdom prescribes that the persons who should have a first charge on those lands for use as house spots for housing are the people from that constituency. If that is not so, then what is the point of a member of Parliament identifying land on the assumption that he will be solving housing problems in his constituency? It does not make sense.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I want to make the Honourable Member understand what Government is trying to do because, obviously, as I have said, they have not grasped the problem in housing because it is obvious that in every constituency that members will identify certain parcels of land. A member who has identified a parcel of land in St. John would probably be able to come to the rescue of somebody in St. Philip simply because at that particular point in time where there is an emergency you could obviously put a person on land which is available.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East again for his cooperation in this exercise. He has been able to identify, like members on this Side, land at Lower Burneys. We have been able to accommodate 271 lots and hopefully that will be transferred to individuals.

We have also been able to include provision, as I said, for a church and I can give him the assurance that the necessary recreational facilities will be included in that area.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 6 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND
AT HOPE PLANTATION AND ORANGE HILL,
BOTH IN THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES
FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks to acquire four small parcels of land at the Hope in St. James. It is hoped with these acquisitions that we will be able to solve the problems created by the need to relocate persons as a result of the amendments which were made by the last administration to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. There are a number of persons in the area who must be relocated in accordance with Government's commitment under that amendment.

It is also hoped, Mr. Speaker, that we will be able to afford housing lots to low income persons who in the normal scheme of things would not be able to pay the \$7 to \$10 per square foot for land that is being offered elsewhere. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, within the Orange Hill area which is close to other areas like White Hill and other areas in St. Andrew, these are areas which have been affected by land slippage. It is also hoped that we would be able to utilise these parcels in order to accommodate some of the people who have been affected by land slippage.

Mr. Speaker, it is also proposed, in order to satisfy the demand for terraced units, that we would be able to construct about 28 terraced units in the Hope/Orange Hill area. This particular construction has already gone out to tender and it is hoped that we would be able to start this particular project by April 15.

It is hoped that people from St. Philip and St. Michael West would be able to make application for units in this particular area. It is not confined, Mr. Speaker, unlike the policy of the last Administration, to people within the constituency. It is hoped too, Mr. Speaker, that we will be able to include in the area a few starter homes. It is also hoped that we would be able to include...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I am a little concerned about the motives of the Minister if he is seeking now to move people from St. Michael West to the Hope. This sounds to me like an attempt to gerrymander my constituency. I do not like that at all, Sir.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I will give the Honourable Member for St. Michael West the assurance that we will be very selective with whom we put in those units and the Honourable Member will be involved in that selection.

It is also hoped, Mr. Speaker, that we will be able to create small house lots as well ranging in sizes from 3 000 to 5 000 square feet to satisfy the need in that area. This particular acquisition is part of the overall Deane Town/Deane's Village Development where we are hoping to create a completely new settlement in this area with the necessary recreational facilities. It is hoped that we will be able to accommodate between 2 500 to 5 000 in this area. It encompasses land at Waterhall, Apes Hill, Lancaster, Deane Town and other spots in Orange Hill. This is just part of the whole series of acquisitions.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West might not be aware that when I grew up as a boy, as I told him already, I always used to hear the old people saying that there are five towns in Barbados, and you know those four but Deane Town where this development is supposed to take place is that fifth town. Most people outside of St. James might not be aware of the area but the correct name is Deane Town. This Administration is bringing some status to that designation.

A few years ago the Government of the day had resited persons living in the area simply because there were no facilities in the area in terms of water, electricity, telephone and roads because the people used to get there by trucks. It is hoped, Mr. Speaker, that we will re-open this area to the families of those poor people who used to live in Deane Town.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that concludes Government's Business for today and I beg to move that this House be adjourned to Tuesday, March 10, 1998, at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to second the motion for the adjournment.

Speaking on the adjournment, just to say that it is the intention to lay the Estimates at the next Sitting of Parliament. I had, in the conclusion to my Budgetary Presentation in September, last year, indicated that I was hopeful that the arrangements including the amendments

to the Standing Orders would have been made to have the Budgetary process as one process.

I fear, however, Sir, that all the arrangements are not in place particularly the change to the Standing Orders of Parliament that govern the debate on financial matters and therefore we would have to observe the old ones. It is still our desire to have the Budgetary process as one process because it is in fact one process.

I just want the House to be aware that we will be laying the Estimates next Tuesday for the debate to start on March 16, 1998, and that there will be a separate presentation of Budgetary Proposals at some later time.

The question that the House be adjourned to Tuesday, March 10, 1998 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 4.30 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, February 17, 1998.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR 1

1. Ombudsman (Salary) Order, 1998.
2. The Judges (Salaries) Order, 1998.
3. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 2) Order, 1998.
4. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 3) Order, 1998.
5. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 4) Order, 1998.
6. Severance Payments (Fund Contribution) (Amendment) Regulations, 1997.
7. Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 1998.
8. The Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 1998.
9. Parliament (Administration) (Salary) Order, 1998.
10. The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) Order, 1998.
11. The Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order, 1998.
12. The Civil Establishment (Part-time Officers) Order, 1998.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS.....2

1. Post Office (Overseas Letter Post) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.

2. Post Office (Private Letter Box) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.

3. Post Office (Inland Letter Post) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998,

4. Post Office (Franking Postage Meter Machines) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.

5. Post Office (Miscellaneous Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.

6. Post Office (International Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.

7. Post Office (Postage Paid) Regulations, 1998.

8. Post Office (Local Express Mail Service) Regulations, 1998.

9. Post Office (Domestic Business Reply) Regulations, 1998.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE

1. Instruments adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 83rd Session held in Geneva on June 20, 1996.
2. Annual Report of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council for the period April 1, 1996-March31, 1997.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Government of the payment of the principal sum of \$10.0 million and the interest thereon for the redemption of housing bonds, to be issued by the Barbados National Bank.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS.....2

The Post Office (Validation of Rates of Postage) Bill, 1998.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS.....2

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 12 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL)
(AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1998..... 3

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 3; Mr. F. J. Stuart, 5;
Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 5.

ORDER NO. 11 - SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES 1997 - 1998 NO. 16 HEAD 13 -
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE..... 8

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 8; Mr. B. M. Taitt, 10;
Dr. R. C. Haynes, 13.

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE 14

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 15.

HEAD 16 - MINISTRY OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE 15

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur,
15.

HEAD 19 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS 15

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 15.

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE , . 15

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 15; Rt. Hon. L. E.
Sandiford, 16; Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

ORDER NO. 13 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (PART-TIME)
OFFICERS ORDER, 1998 16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

ORDER NO. 14 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (TEACHERS)
(AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1998..... 16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

ORDER NO. 15 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE INCREASE IN SALARY OF THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL..... 16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

ORDER NO. 16 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
RATES OF PAY FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
AND CASUAL EMPLOYEES OF
GOVERNMENT 16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

ORDER NO. 17 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARIES (REMUNERATION AND
ALLOWANCES) ORDER, 1998 16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

ORDER NO. 18 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
(REMUNERATION AND ALLOWANCES OF
MEMBERS) ORDER, 1998 16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

ORDER NO. 19 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE INCREASE OF RATES OF SALARIES
AND ALLOWANCES OF THE PERSONAL
STAFF OF THE PRIME MINISTER..... 16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

ORDER NO. 20 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE INCREASE OF RATES OF SALARIES
AND ALLOWANCES FOR PERSONAL
ASSISTANTS TO MINISTERS 16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

ORDER NO. 10 - BILL ENTITLED AN ACT TO
VALIDATE THE COLLECTION OF RATES
OF POSTAGE PAID TO THE POSTMASTER
GENERAL.....16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16, 18, 19; Rt.
Hon. L. E. Sandiford, 17.

ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL
HOUSING CORPORATION OF LAND
SITUATE AT LOWER BURNEYS, ST.
MICHAEL.....19

Hon. G. W. Payne, 19; Mr. H. F. Lashley,
20; Mr. W. C. C. Callender, 21; Sir Harold
St. John, 21; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 23; Mr.
G. A. Clarke, 25, 28; Mr. F. J. Stuart, 27, 28;
Hon. G. W. Payne, 28, 29, 30.

ORDER NO. 6 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF
LAND SITUATE AT THE HOPE
PLANTATION AND ORANGE HILL, ST.
JAMES 31

Hon. G.W.Payne, 31.

SUSPENSION 14

ADJOURNMENT.....31

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 31; Rt. Hon. O. S.
Arthur, 31.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ARTHUR, Rt. Hon. O. S. (St. Peter) CALLENDER, Mr. W. C. C. (Christ Church East) CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North) GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St. Philip North) HAYNES, Dr. R. C. (St. Michael South Central) KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy) LASHLEY, Mr. H. F. (St. Michael South East) MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East) PAYNE, Hon. G. W. (St. Andrew) St. JOHN, Sir Harold (Christ Church South) SANDIFORD, Rt. Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South) SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. Thomas) STUART, Mr. F. J. (St. Philip South) TAITT, Mr. B. M. (St. Michael West)