THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, Septembers, 1998

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, September 8, 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, 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)
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)
Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.
Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport) (Leader of the House)
Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)
Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J.P.
Hon. G. W. PAYNE (Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing)
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)
Mr. J. M. EDGHILL
Mr. F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.
Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER, J. P., B.A., Dip. Ed., B.Sc.
Mr. H. F. LASHLEY
Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport)
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: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Wednesday, September 2, 1998.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the Honourable the House of Assembly of its meeting of Wednesday, September 2, 1998 which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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:

1. The Financial Institutions (Asset Classification and Provisioning) Regulations, 1998;

2. The Financial Institutions (Capital Adequacy) Regulations, 1998;

3. The Financial Institutions (Fees) Regulations, 1998;

4. Guarantees granted under the Exempt Insurance Act, Cap. 308A to:

Aeroquib-Vickers Assurance Ltd.

Bridgeco Indemnity Limited

General Mechanical Reinsurance Co. Ltd.

Glenbrook Insurance Company Ltd.

GMRC Holdings Limited

Missouri Reinsurance (Barbados) Inc.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the Years 1995-1996 and 1996-1997.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES Hon. Miss B.

A. MILLER: I am commanded to lay:

1. The Guarantee of Loans (Companies) Bill, 1998;

2. A Resolution to approve the Vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels 'of land at Oistins, Christ Church - Martindales Road, St. Michael - Haggatt Hall, St. Michael - Bournes Land, St. Christopher, Christ Church and Windsor Tenantry, St. George.

3. A Resolution to approve the Vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land at Charnocks, Christ Church - Bagatelle, St. James - Spring Garden, Near Brighton, St. Michael - Bridge Road, St. Michael - Vaughan's Road, Horse Hill, St. Joseph - Lakes Folly, St. Michael - Warrens, St. Michael and Warners, Christ Church.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Question No. 70, to ask the Prime Minister:

1. Will the Minister state whether any expenditure has, since their appointment been incurred to date in respect of the following:

a) The Commission of Inquiry on Public Service Vehicles;

b) The St. Joseph Hospital Commission of Inquiry; and

c) The Commission of Inquiry on Casino Gambling, and the amount of any such expenditure?

2. Question No. 71, to ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport:

Will the Minister state:

a) Whether any Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Special Envoys have been appointed since September 6, 1994;

b) The duties and responsibilities of any such Ambassadors and Envoys and any specific tasks and assignments allocated to any of them;

c) The emoluments, other allowances, travel expenses and other costs to Government of the appointment, work and service of those Ambassadors and Envoys; and

d) What reports, if any, have been submitted to Government by any of those Ambassadors or Envoys?

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that the Guarantee of Loans (Companies) Bill 1998 be read a first time.

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

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

ELECTION OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before we begin Orders of the Day I would like to draw to the attention ^ of Your Honour and the House of Assembly that the Chairman of Committees is not present today. He advised me § of his absence last Friday. He is attending the » Commonwealth Games.

In the circumstances, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central has been nominated to undertake the task of Chairman of Committees for this day's Sitting.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 14 - SECOND READING OF A BILL TO AMEND THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT ACT

Rt. Hon. O. -S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Members of the House who are desperately in need of vacation have been asked to come back out and I am pleased that the matter which has brought the House back is of such a nature as is about to be debated in this Parliament. There has been for a long time a form of occupation segregation of the worst kind in the public service of Barbados. There are in fact, Sir, at least four different classes of persons employed and paid from the Consolidated Fund each of which category operates under vastly different circumstances, terms and conditions from the other. At the pinnacle, Sir, there are persons defined as public officers who are full time employees of the Government and whose post are provided for under the Civil Establishment Act and the Orders laid thereunder. They enjoy comprehensive security of tenure. They cannot easily be dismissed and indeed, so secured are their tenure, Mr. Speaker, that person employed as public officers can only be dismissed by the Governor General on the advice of the Public Services Commission and even then they have recourse to the Privy Council. 11.30a.m.

At the second level are a class of employees called public employees who are also full time employees whose posts are contained in the Schedule of Personal Emoluments and they differ from public officers to the extent that they do not enjoy the provisions for Pensions under the Widows and Children's Pension Bund.

There are two classes of persons paid from the Consolidated Fund who have been the victims of special disadvantages. I speak particularly of persons classed as temporary employees, who despite the fact that they may be engaged in substantive work on an extended, and in many respects on a permanent basis, function in a temporary status subject to the discretion of the Ministry of the Civil Service. These officers, Sir, do not enjoy security of tenure even though they may enjoy relatively similar pension benefits, to the extent that their employment is at the discretion of the Ministry of the Civil Service.

At the very bottom, Mr. Speaker, is a whole class of Barbadians called casual employees. The very term itself, Mr. Speaker, carries with it a stigma. There has never been no certainty whatsoever, not just about the tenure but about the status of this Barbadian who may occupy such a position sometimes for as much as 30 years and an entire career. This class of employee enjoys absolutely no security of tenure, Mr. Speaker, and as a result they have found themselves in a position of being unable to do what all other employees of Government can do, go to a Bank for example and be able to secure a loan on the strength of their status as a person who is permanently employed.

I am sure that everyone in this House agrees, Mr. Speaker, that this form of occupational segregation has gone on too long. I am sure that everyone agrees that that the over 1 800 temporary employees in the public service require to have their circumstance put .right and almost 5 000 casual employees also need a fundamental change in their relationship in the public service to confer on them the decency and the civility of being treated like servants of the Crown, in this day and age, should be treated.

The legislation before this Parliament, Mr. Speaker, three pieces of interlocking legislation are intended, once and for all, to create one class, and I must stress the point, Sir, to create one class of public officer in Barbados, abolishing the distinction that exists between the classes and create but one class and to create the conditions at long last for equality and status of all persons employed by the State and paid for by the Consolidated Fund. That, Sir, is the intention. We want to, in so doing, to abolish the stigma that has historically attached itself to the notion of casual employment. In a more pragmatic sense as well, Sir, we want through these Amendments to the existing legislation to confer as well, improved gratuity and pension entitlements on the persons who have hitherto languished at the bottom of the Public Service in a capacity, particularly, of temporary employee.

The three pieces of legislation before us, Sir, the Amendments to the Civil Establishment Act, the Amendment to the Civil Establishment Order and the Amendment to the Pensions Miscellaneous Provisions Act are intended to put us in a position, where upon their coming into existence, there will be but one class of public servant in Barbados with the full security enjoyed by that now one class of public servant and those persons at the bottom will find their entitlement to gratuity, pensions and other terms and conditions substantially upgraded.

In a previous presentation to this, I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, the stark contrast in the gratuity and pensions entitlement, that are involved, in for example, a maid, having herself classified as a casual worker and that same maid performing a similar service on behalf of the same Government being treated as public employee. It is staggering, Mr. Speaker.

A maid, for example, who has worked as a public officer for her full 33 years would go home with a gratuity of $29 695 and a pension of between $7 000 and $9 000 depending upon whether they opt for full pension. Whereas the same casual employee, who has done the same service, for the same state will go home with a gratuity of only $ 12 000 and a NIS pension, when they eventually qualify for that of $8 500. This is just a token exercise we are giving and that situation of disadvantage is wrong, it has been wrong for a long time and we must put it right.

It simply cannot be right, Mr. Speaker, that the same Government could employ two people doing exactly the same thing and merely because one is called a casual employee and the next is called a public officer, that the public officer gets a gratuity of $29 695 for service rendered on behalf of the state and a casual worker merely because of the title gets a gratuity of $12 000.

Mr. Speaker, we are therefore not just into symbolism. This is intended to change the relationship of this class of disadvantaged Barbados in the term of status but also in important material terms.

There are also, Mr. Speaker, important ways in which casual workers have been disadvantaged. For example, a public officer can retire at 60 and enjoy a public sector pension between the ages of 60 to the age of 65, at which stage he would qualify for National Insurance pension and then the public sector pension can be topped up to the National Insurance pension. Whereas a person who is a casual employee, if they were to retire at 60, they would have to find their own way of making it in the world until they can qualify for their NIS pension at the age of 65. That, Sir, cannot be fair.

There is, therefore, obviously, a tremendous advantage by putting all the casual workers of Barbados in a position where they too can be able to exercise the option of retiring at 60 and being able to enjoy the benefit of a pension like any other person employed by the Government of Barbados.

Equally, too as well, one of the areas in which the disadvantage is most acute is in the area of the security of tenure. As I have said, a public officer cannot be easily dismissed, Sir. It has to be taken before Services Commission, it must go to the Governor General and a right for appeal can go to the Privy Council. A casual employee can be dismissed with no more than 48 hours notice.
11.40a.m.

Surely, Sir, that can be no basis upon which a person can plan for a sustainable livelihood. So what we intend to do with this legislation, Mr. Speaker, is to change all that once and for all. I want to be part of a country where a person if he goes to work in the public service he goes to a post. If he can do the work, Sir, he is appointed to the post and gets on with the job. But this business about indefinite acting appointments must come to an end.

I also want to be part of a country, Mr. Speaker, where we do not put people in casual employment for 30 years and leave them there at the discretion of bosses and not being able to go to the bank and be able to borrow against a permanent income.

I want, Sir, to be part of a public service where the person at the top, the Permanent Secretary, and the person at the bottom, a general worker, are treated as being the same public personage, that is, that they have the same entitlement, they are public officers because they are performing a service on behalf of the people no matter how different may be the level of technical complexity in the task involved.

Sir, what we are proposing to do first of all is to amend the Civil Establishments Act. As you know, the Civil Establishments Act is that piece of legislation that allows for appointment. But we recognise, however, Mr. Speaker, that that class of person called a casual employee at present while he is the victim of certain disadvantages that he has certain rights that we cannot strip him of. For example, unlike other public officers that person can be openly involved in partisan politics without reference to anybody although of course that has not stopped other public officers who are not casual staff from being so involved, Sir. A casual employee can be openly involved in political activity without having to ask anybody's permission to do so.

Secondly, a casual employee can undertake additional and other work without having to seek prior approval. Other civil servants who now wish to do outside work have to seek the formal permission of the Governor General before they can do so.

Sir, in seeking to bring casual employees within the mainstream what we are doing, Sir, is so far as they have existing rights that they may themselves wish to retain, which they could not exercise if they become public officers, we are giving them the option of exercising the right to become a public officer. If they do not want to exercise the right, Sir, that is their business. You cannot strip from a person existing rights but we are amending the Civil Establishments Act, Mr. Speaker, to allow both casual workers and public

employees the right to become public officers and at the same time we have to give them the right to retain the existing status if they so wish. Some 4000 persons, Sir, would benefit from the exercise of this particular right.

As regards the temporary posts in the public service, Sir, some 1 800 Barbadians now find themselves occupying that particular status. Some temporary posts are, as you are aware, related to the carrying out of funded projects and obviously when the project ends those posts are abolished. What we are seeking to do, through the Civil Establishments Order that is before the House, Sir, is to provide for the creation of 4 000 posts to accommodate the appointment of casual and public employees in addition to the establishment of other temporary posts excluding those temporary posts that will come to an end when their projects finish.

If I may illustrate on that latter point, Sir, any major project might have a project officer'to carry out the works and a temporary post will be created in the nature of a project officer. When the project ends that temporary post ends. Those posts will not be established but there are a number of persons in the public service who are in fact doing permanent work but are classed as being in temporary employment and we are seeking to clean up that entire range of arrangements to allow those persons to be employed.

So the first thing we are doing, Mr. Speaker, as I said, is to amend the Civil Establishments Act to confer on casual and public employees the option to become public officers or as they wish, to remain in their existing status.

Secondly we want, Mr. Speaker, to amend the Civil Establishments Order to include in the Order the new posts to be established. Some 4 000 new posts involving casual, temporary and public employees are to be established. But there will be more and that is what 1 am coming to, Sir, because we are trying to clean up the list of temporary posts to decide which are the posts that are only associated with projects that would end when the projects end and which are the posts that are really part of the permanent exercise of conducting the Government and we will establish those as well, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, a consequential adjustment would be a change in the Pensions Act of Barbados. One of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, Sir, why this matter took so long to come to the House is that we just could not simply change the Civil Establishments Act and introduce an order without dealing with other consequential pieces of legislation. As the situation presently stands the pensions for Public Officers are governed by CAP 28 of the Laws of Barbados, the Pensions Act. There is a Casual Employees Pensions Act of 1962 which we will now have to change, Sir, and then of course there are also persons working at statutory boards who are casual employees and who are paid pensions under the Statutory Board Casual Employees Act and we will now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, have to change those to enable all casual employees, whether in Statutory Boards or in the Central Government, to qualify for the same gratuity and the same other pension and allowances as public officers in the rest of the Public Service of Barbados.

There is before us as well a Miscellaneous Pensions Provisions Act, 1998 which will confer, Mr. Speaker, on existing casual employees in the service of the Crown, entitlement to the same pension, gratuity and allowances as all other public officers.

Secondly, Sir, because we want these measures to become effective from this year in its entirety, any person who was a casual officer this year but has gone home will find that he or she will now benefit from these provisions because under section 10(2) of the proposed amendment to the Miscellaneous Pensions Provisions Act we will confer on casual employees who were in the service of the Crown as at the end of December 31, 1997 the same benefits, the same pension and gratuity and other allowances as any public officer who continues to be in the service. So if a casual worker went home in March of this year he or she would now be entitled to the same pension and gratuity arrangements as a public officer because it was always the intention, Sir, that these arrangements should have come into existence from the start of this year.

I have also said, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that there are persons working at a number of designated statutory organisations paid for from the Consolidated Fund who are classed as casual employees and the Boards to which I refer are the Sanitation Authority, the National Conservation Commission, the National Sports Council, the National Assistance Board, the National Cultural Foundation, the National Training Board, the Child Care Board, the Barbados Tourism Authority, the Barbados Vocational Training Board, the Rural Development Commission, the Urban Development Commission, the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, the National Productivity Board, the Public Utilities Board and the Student Revolving Loan Fund Management Committee, Sir. All of the casual employees at those scheduled statutory boards will now be entitled to the same conditions of pension, gratuity and allowances as Public Officers under the Civil Establishment Act. So that there would be no difference in pension entitlement, now, Sir, between any public officer in Barbados. 11.50a.m.

And what it means, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that whereas a public officer can now retire at age 60, get a public sector

pension and then qualify, of course, for the NIS at age 65 and a casual employee would have to wait until age 65 to get his pension, Sir, a person who is now a casual employee can now retire at the age of 60 and be entitled to the same pension conditions as any other public officer.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would be grateful if the House would consider my second reading speech on the first piece of legislation as intended to cover the consequential pieces of legislation that will follow in time. The matter has taken a long time and the law pertaining to the public service seems to appear that it does not excite interest on the part of the legal luminaries.

I like to read the law to satisfy my curiosity. It is more archaic than economic. But as far as I am aware, Sir, the only serious major study on the law pertaining to the public service has been by Mr. Kenny Anthony, MSc. Masters thesis. You can be assured however, Mr. Speaker, that the Public Service of Barbados is like any other sector that its functions have to be governed by law. And the exercise in getting this simple policy executed has involved having to go through a large number of various different pieces of legislation, some of them obscure, and make sure that the consequential amendments to one are followed through in the amendments to the other. And perhaps, Sir, the time is coming when the law pertaining to the public service will have to be treated as a specialist area in its own right. There are very few people who really understand it. It is one of the most convoluted, Byzantine things written in language that sometimes you get the impression it is intended more to create the opportunity for confusion, than to create the illumination of enlightenment.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am a layman who feels that one should pick up a book about law and understand it, in the same way that a man can pick up a book about economics and understand it. I feel so. And you do find, Sir, that to read the General Orders and the law pertaining to the public service is very, very difficult. It is written in archaic terms. There is no wonder, Sir, that you have all of these structures that are so dysfunctional because the law governing it is very often not intended to be simple.

Perhaps what I am saying, Sir, is that we do need a codification of all of this legislation into one Public Services Act. We have a whole slew of bits and pieces of legislation pertaining to the general service, statutory boards and pertaining to pensions, Sir. The standard of the General Orders in law is much to be disputed. I am saying all this, Sir, because this has taken a long time between making the utterance of the policy and coming to the House.

I must thank, Sir, The University of the West Indies and the law lecturers who contributed. I must thank the Committee, the Trade Unions and the Social Partners, Sir, who have contributed to this. But I can think of nothing that could be more worthwhile than to bring back this House at this stage for this important piece of legislation to become formally part of the Laws of Barbados. And I have, Sir, the deep honour to be able to commend this legislation to the House, Sir, and to beg that it be read a second time.

I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sure that I can begin by saying that the Government would not expect any resistance to this measure from this Side, because as the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister responsible for Civil Establishment said in his presentation, he was sure that all Members in the House desired some of the outcomes which this legislation would bring.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sure the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who has been in this House in local and other Governments for some considerable time, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South who has been responsible for civil establishment for some considerable time will be able to give evidence that these are matters that have concerned the political directorate for decades.

This is a question which has been dogging various administrations from almost the day we became independent and from 1966 through to the present we have been seeking to bring reform to the public sector in such a manner as to remove the labyrinth distinctions, which existed especially in the colonial system.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, anyone who is familiar with public administration as it is practised in the United Kingdom would understand why perhaps the original laws which govern public employees in colonies and therefore, Barbados, would have been of the nature it was. There are many different kinds of employees in the United Kingdom Public Service and, as a result there were many different kinds of employees in any service that would have been set up following the pattern of the United Kingdom.

Now, Sir, soon after independence an attempt was made and there was some reform of the various sectors. And again about ten years ago, there was a beginning of this reform, when under Chapter 25 of the Laws of Barbados, changed to allow for a broader and better interpretation of pension.

The whole question of what constitutes a public employee has exercised the courts for many a year and so there had to be legislation to define a public employee in Barbados. And you will find, Sir, that even today who or what constitutes a public employee is not a matter that is settled and is not likely to be settled with this legislation although the intent is clear.

There is a difference between a public officer and a public employee. And, Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that civil servants of yore would want to maintain the distinction. And that is why, Sir, some of us have never accepted and are not likely to accept the thesis which suggest that there should be some class or group set apart from the politicians who should be making certain decisions as they apply to employees and people as compared with having some special elitist group that would be able to make better decisions than those who are accountable to the voter. The only answer a person has to a political decision is to vote for or against that decision when the opportunity presents itself. I do not wish to take the debate in this direction, but I am saying that therein lies part of the problem of what the Honourable Member calls discriminatory approaches to various sectors of persons who draw their emoluments from the public purse, 12.00 noon

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this legislation therefore is not likely to excite any resistance -whatever. We will take the opportunity to discuss some aspects of public employment that needs to be made clear. First of all, I believe that if as the legislation sets out to do a large cadre of public employees, a large cadre of so-called casual employees, are going to be given an option that in the same way when the VAT was being introduced or whenever there is going to be fundamental change there was a unit that took the trouble to go and seek to educate persons as to what is happening, I would respectfully submit that it is important that the casual employees be given an opportunity in crystal clear terms to understand what it is they are being given an opportunity to ask for.

Mr. Speaker, very often persons like Honourable Members in here and certain senior people in society take for granted that if they understand the particular concepts that all other people understand and as a result we pass legislation from time to time which affects the lives of people and the people are not themselves aware that their lives are affected until there comes a time when a decision has to be made and they discover that some recalcitrant public officer is saying to them, "I am very sorry but you do not qualify." Whereas the person thought all along that they had qualified.

This happens for example with some aspects of national insurance and it happens with the benefits. Not many people for example know that there is only a one-year period within which certain benefits from NIS may be claimed and when they go to claim those benefits they discover to their horror that they do not qualify because the fluxion of time has affected their capacity to benefit from what they thought was an ordinary benefit. So the whole concept of opting is something which ought to be clearly spelt out. There is a lot of useless time by the Government Information Service on the television and I am sure that if given the opportunity they will be able to design a methodology by which they can help casual employees so called to understand what is going on.

I believe that in the same way other booklets have been prepared by the Government that an appropriate booklet should be prepared not only for the employees but for their representatives. I would make bold to say that notwithstanding the presentation by the Prime Minister that there will be Honourable Members in here who after this is passed might not be able to answer accurately to their constituents, what does this all mean.

It would not do any harm if there is a document that allows and I would say an apolitical document, because there is no point if all of those who receive a benefit from every little opportunity that presents itself... There are some who cannot account for their stewardship and will be seeking to hang on to almost anything which comes along as evidence of their stewardship. I was merely suggesting that if, as the Prime Minister says, both Sides of the House wish and desire this matter to be brought to a head then we could have an apolitical document but if the Government seeks to get any extra or extraordinary benefits we will feel bound to point out that it was set in motion a long time ago and is not the brainchild of any particular individual or group at any given point in time continuum.

I also feel that it is time the Government puts in place a policy that is known beforehand. Certainly it is a policy which this Side would put in place when the opportunity presents itself where persons know beyond the shadow of a doubt how long is an acting appointment to last or how long a temporary appointment is to last before the holder of that post can be expected to be appointed.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I joined the United Nations Secretariat there was a clear policy that applied to the top permanent officers right down to the lowest, meanest cleaner that you held a probationary position for two years, after which, you were appointed to the post unless you were not qualified, at which point, they would ask you politely to go-

I recall when I became Minister of Health discovering that there was a public health employee who had been acting in a position for 17 years. I cite that always as an example of what the bureaucracy can do to a human being. Seventeen years in one position acting in a position or post is unconscionable and I believe that two years is reasonable. Some may have other views but we can go through the service now and find a number of persons who have not been appointed.

As a matter of fact, one of my constituents came to me to raise the question as to why she had not been appointed. She verily believes that she is politically victimised. Now it may or may not be true. I have moved from the 17-year

example which happens to be in a St. James constituency but I am talking about a constituent of mine who is working in the public sector.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member from his chair is suggesting that I ought to have interfered in the proceedings in the public sector and he knows that according to his protestations that that cannot be done. He is saying now that they practise differently, that they intervene directly; but that is a matter for them. This lady is satisfied that she is being victimised politically because she has observed others have come into the same post certainly after her and there are no negative reports on her and yet people from her category - this is what she has reported to me and she is a truthful person and I believe her - who have come after her have been appointed and she has remained there unappointed. She believes, whether it is true or not, that the only reason she is not being appointed is because her political persuasions are well-known.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is obviously speaking of a person who would have been in a temporary post when he was part of the Government and if there was any victimisation it would have had to be victimisation when he was both her representative and part of the Government of the day.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, Sir, it is entirely possible that that is true.

Now, Sir, if in fact I was unable to help her, I left four years ago and you would think that compassion would drip from the breast of a Government headed by the Right Honourable Member. Four years later she finds herself in a position where she has to complain to me. I have drawn to her attention that this kind of legislation was on the cards and that arising out of this there could be no justification whatsoever for her not being appointed. She is only symptomatic of a number of persons from all constituencies in Barbados who feel for whatsoever reason that they are less than equal than others in the system.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the time has come for there to be a clear personnel policy of the Government. It does not matter which party constitutes the Government there ought to be a clear personnel policy. In fact, on entering the service on any level one ought to be able to get a manual which spells out what the policy is. That is what a good personnel department ought to have. And Chief Personnel Officers of the past will be able to tell Your Honour that when I first came back to this country and subsequently I have raised with them why is there not a proper personnel department with all of the usual things which you can find in a modern human resource department.

It is unacceptable that two years or 18 months before the turn of the millennium it is still possible for an employee to be in total ignorance of what his or her rights are in the context of working for the biggest employer in the country.

The Government is supposed to be the best employer in the country and again, Sir, it does not matter which party constitutes the Government because the Government stays no matter whether the party is in or out and those who make the decisions. That is why sometimes the hierarchy believe that it ought to make some political decisions because it is so constant. But those who make the decisions continue and in some instances policies that they were not able to get carried out under one administration they can get to carry out under the other.

The fact is though that an individual who wishes to be recruited into the public sector still does not know, still cannot tell, in the Barbados Service, how is the best way to apply for work.

What is more, sometimes they write to the department that is responsible for recruitment and they never get a response. Sometimes, especially as it applies to the category of employees which the Honourable Member says this legislation is addressing primarily, they never hear anything else but that there are no vacancies. If you live in certain parts of the country and you hear there are no vacancies and then you see people from other parts of the country are getting into the civil service in large numbers - the Honourable Member knows exactly what I am speaking about - if you live in Bush Hall for example and you apply for casual work and you are told there are no vacancies and then you know people from elsewhere are going on fairly frequently there is bound to be a level of frustration and a level of deep pain on the part of persons who wish to do no more than to feed their families like everybody else.

It is recognised that in certain circumstances there will not be enough jobs for everybody to get some but there should be no circumstance in which one portion of the population appears to be able to get jobs that much more frequently and more easily than other sections of the population.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Of course there are some areas that have peculiar skills and they may show up in certain circumstances. Obviously the people who live in St. Peter will get earlier and better work at an institution in St. Peter than people who live far away provided that they have the necessary goods.

Quite seriously, Mr. Speaker, there ought to be a clear policy on the part of the public sector if you are working for the Government if you are being paid from the public purse

then the conditions of work should approximate some ideal that has been set out, some standard that has been laid down which is known to everyone beforehand.

Mr. Speaker, I was amused recently when I read in the newspaper that there were some persons who would not be able to go into the University because of some technical difficulty perceived by somebody that they would not have an outlet for honing their skills. I was even further amazed when the University said that it would guarantee a place for these persons. I can only say, Sir, that I found it amazing that the University was willing to make that statement because it is probably the first time in Christendom that a university was willing to make that kind of statement of commitment of what it would do when in fact it had not been able to do it for any other category at any other time in its history.

It is the Government of the day or the administration of the day that ought to be determining what level of skill it would help provide in its system. On another occasion I will address this matter a little more fully. I found it remarkable that the University was prepared to make a statement of that kind at that time for the reason it said.

I believe that a personnel policy must include not only recruitment, not only condition of work, but conditions of retirement. And I think the time has come for the National Insurance Board to look at some of the provisions which were necessary to be included in the provision of social security at the time national insurance became part of our social landscape because there are some provisions which again ordinary folk find extremely difficult to understand. Only last Sunday I was engaged in a conversation by a person who had lived outside of Barbados who cannot understand the rationale and does not understand the rationale for the inability after having been back in Barbados living for 30 years to get a non-contributory pension because that person has lived outside of Barbados for a period of 12 years or more.

One understands the rationale for that inclusion at the time when it was included but in 1998 there is really no reason if a person has lived in Barbados for the last 25 years or indeed the last 20 years if that person arrives at age 65 and is in receipt of no pension elsewhere why that person ought to be deprived of getting a pension here in Barbados.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Members are trying to give me some instruction but I cannot understand exactly what they are saying. I think that in some circumstances if they are able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Director...

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: If the Honourable Member will give way. The regulations governing the granting of pensions to persons who have been living outside of Barbados since they became age 40 have been clearly set out. They have to reside in Barbados for a maximum of 12 years after they have reached their 40th birthday. The reason is that they would then if they were working have had an opportunity to contribute to the scheme otherwise somebody else is paying for it.

There are some of our citizens who have lived overseas and are already in receipt of pensions from social security schemes in Canada, in the United States or elsewhere who carry reciprocal agreements which we have negotiated with those countries and make those payments. The decision - I think it was legislated as well - was taken to the extent that their pension is below the minimum contributory pension payable in Barbados then the difference is made up by the National Insurance.

Those who do not qualify for the overseas pension because they were not contributing over there and have never contributed over here, then it is a question of whether or not they have satisfied the conditions that would entitle them after the period of years of non-contributory pension. 12.20p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member in the last part that he discussed, those are precisely the ones that I am addressing. There are people in Barbados who get nothing from anybody. All I am saying, Sir, is that we are at the stage where there are so few of those. I am saying that this country can afford if they reach the age of 65 to give them the little non-contributory pension. That is the only point that I am making, Sir.

I have no doubt that someone will be able to demonstrate meticulously why not. I am saying in the context of this discussion that we can afford it in this country.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Precisely, just because it is the right thing to do. You know, unless you are a representative who sees the plight of an individual, if you discuss a category, it is easy to argue a position but if you see an individual who is suffering a particular difficulty, it is only when you come face to face with that individual's plight that you can begin to understand how really harsh the particular regulation can be and in many instances is. All one is saying is that if we are discussing the upliftment of our people generally, then we should include that particular provision as part of our consideration.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, very recently, I think last week, we said farewell to a man who has made a fantastic contribution to Barbados. A man, who, almost single-

handedly led ordinary black Barbadians to understand lawn tennis and that it can be played. For a substantial part of his life because he never had a position that was identifiable until after he had reached a certain age, he worked in this country and made a fantastic contribution and the....

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am speaking of a man who is better known as "Peace" Crichlow. He made a fantastic contribution to this country. He was buried last week and that was one of the reasons why I came in here a little late.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am speaking of a man whose name is Milton Crichlow but he was better known as "Peace" Crichlow. He was unable to get any kind of pension in this country. When he died, Sir, he died in peculiar circumstances and he is one of those who fell between the stools. He was a man of such high principle that he absolutely refused when one attempted to go to battle for him, he determined that if that is how they are going to treat him, that is how it must be, leave it.

The fact is that he was one who could not qualify because he could not demonstrate that he had had a "permanent job" with either one of the various agencies with whom he had worked. He used to go into the elementary and secondary schools and help those who appeared to have any kind of aptitude for lawn tennis. He spent a lot of time with women's cricket teams coaching *et cetera*. He had no permanent job and therefore when he thought that all this casual time he had spent around the various schools and institutions of Barbados would count towards something, when he came to the stage when he should have been receiving some kind of benefit, he discovered from the bureaucracy that he did not qualify.

He would not himself have wished any case to be put for him and I do not put any case for him posthumously, I use him as an example of the kind of thing that happens around in Barbados.

Another one that is very interesting is that there are many men who are very strong, casual type workers. They are very strong after the age of 60 unlike some of the softer types in our community who by the time there are age 62 have begun to show the effects of the storms they have passed through.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I make no reference to anyone in this House. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West carries himself very well, Sir. I am talking about the softer types and the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister thinks I am addressing any Member who is 62 or over.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a situation that I know intimately where a person went to work at age 61 in the Ministry of Communications and Works as a casual worker, worked past 65, so he would have worked from age 61 to age 70 plus. He worked, in other words, for 10 years. He was a casual employee obviously. His job was to work along with the cantoneers as they then used to be called *et cetera.*

That person did not qualify for any kind of pension from the Government. Technically, that person was an employee of the Government for more than 10 years. The 1982 amendment said that any one who worked for the Government for 10 years or more was entitled to a pension. Now, he went to work at 61 and worked until age 72 but he was a casual employee and he was not a public employee so at the end of those 10 years he is 72 years old and he lived from 72 years to age 89 and almost every year he used to ask if there is any possibility of getting a pension.

This legislation, if it was in existence, he would have qualified for some kind of pension. Fortunately, his children did not do so badly so they could help take care of him. His is an example that I know of and we cannot legislate for every example but we should have legislation that will encompass all possibilities and allow them, Mr. Speaker, to be encompassed in our attempts at social reform.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member made reference to public law as he was sitting down. I would share the view that it is not an easy area but it is one which I always commend to young students. I always recommend to them that they should find in their course a method of including administrative law in their programme. I believe the University has now made it compulsory for Caribbean students to do administrative law. It once got me into trouble, Sir. In a public lecture I made some reference to those lawyers who had studied in England and who had not had any acquaintance with the discipline and somebody carried it out and gave wrong information to one of my friends who was angry with me for years because he was under the impression that I had said something pejorative about him. 12.30p.m.

What I was saying is that Caribbean lawyers who were trained in England, especially in the early days, who had not been specifically exposed to administrative law, had some difficulty in the practice of administrative law when it came to seeking out the rights of the individual versus the State.

Indeed it was the present Prime Minister of St. Lucia, but before him a Member of Parliament now in Grenada, Francis Alexis who is the pioneer in the Caribbean of massive work on public law. Before him of course there had been 3 or 4 people who have written. Carnegie has written well on public law. There is one in Jamaica, Lloyd Barnett, and for a short while, Sir, the former Governor of St. Kitts has written one or two books on Caribbean Public Law and now of course, at the University, there are some young people who are carrying on and they are ably led by Dr. Fiadjoe who is the Reader in Law. They are all now turning out large quantities of articles addressing these issues of public law.

There is one man who again he is involved in Trinidad. He was a policeman, a man called Endell Thomas. Endell Thomas was a policeman and the authorities in Trinidad ran afoul of him in his head and thereafter followed a classic struggle between an individual and the State which resulted in some change in the concept of the public servant in the Caribbean. Up until Endell Thomas took his case to the Privy Council there was a different attitude in the Caribbean even within the courts as to what a public servant could and could not do, what were the rights of a public servant and the confusion which persons had between the concept of the prerogative, that is to say that all public servants in the United Kingdom were deemed to be the Queen's servants and therefore they were at the discretion of the Queen.

In the Caribbean they did not know that it had changed in Britain and so they continued concepts that were old and outmoded down here in the Caribbean until the now much maligned Privy Council was able to show them that they had a way to go.

It is very interesting though that the best decisions made in public law were not made by the Privy Council. They were made by judges at first instance whose judgements were reinstated when the persons went to the Privy Council. It is not well known for example that in Britain it is Ministers who dismiss civil servants. This always comes as a shock. Mr. Speaker, it comes as a shock that there is no public service commission in Britain to deal with matters as we have a public service commission here. The First Lord of the Treasury is in charge, a politician. The first Lord of the Treasury is responsible for the public officers. There are so many things which are amusing when you read - people who are supposed to know.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There is a Public Service Commission in Barbados that has powers that there is no such animal in the United Kingdom. Anyhow, Sir, there is a day coming when we could have a nice debate on that and spend some time but it goes to show, Sir.

On the other hand I think having said one thing for the position of the Ministers let me say something for the position of the public servants. In Britain this year there was word that the Prime Minister was going to do a reshuffle and was going to be sending a particular person to a particular department. The Permanent Secretary in that department wrote to the Prime Minister and told him do not send such and such a person to this department, there will be a conflict of interest.

In England, the Permanent Secretary wrote to the Prime Minister a letter and told him I understand that you are considering sending such and such a person to head this department, well do not send that person to head this department because there will be a conflict of interest given what has occurred with that person who is the Member of the House of Commons and is in the Government. It was considered perfectly proper for the Permanent Secretary to write the Prime Minister and say to him, do not send that person to head this department. If anyone wishes to get the actual details of that I will be happy to do so.

The Honourable Member says he wanted to have the person at the lowest level equal to the person at the highest level, but Governments in Barbados and the Caribbean will have to accept that people who are in technical positions, ought to be able to rise to the same level as the Chief Administrator in a department so as to retain people of a certain quality in the departments without they having to move to go on to get promotion and thereby rob the department of the expertise which has been so carefully put together.

I read in the newspapers, Sir, for example, that the Chief Town Planner had been promoted to Permanent Secretary. Now, Sir, there is nothing inherently wrong with that, there could not be. Our system should be such that a person who was functioning at that level, who by virtue of his performance and/or capability had reached the level where his emoluments should be those of a Permanent Secretary, that he ought to have been able, not the individual, Sir, but a person in that situation ought to have been able to be promoted to the level of Permanent Secretary without having to give up the expertise which that department so seriously would need.

It may be fortunate that in Barbados we always can find somebody to replace the person who moves on but it takes time before the new person is able to bring to the fore the experience which the original holder of the post would have in that job.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to reform the civil service there are certain concepts which have to form part of that reform. It is simply not enough to say public sector reform and to come and offer solutions to problems that have been worked on for the last 18 or 20 years. It has taken about

19 years for this legislation to c.ome to this position. I would say roughly about 19 years this legislation has been in the making but we ought to have a department in the same way that you have a Research Department for the Central Bank, in the same way that you have a Research Department in the Ministry of Finance there ought to be a Research Department in the Ministry responsible for Human Resource Development.

As a matter of fact, Sir, when I first came back to this country I formed the impression, and I cast no aspersions on anybody, but whenever it was not too sure what you should do with a person you would send them to be Chief Establishments Officer or Chief Personnel Officer or one of those things. There was not the same kind of esteem for a Chief Personnel Officer or a Chief Establishments Officer as there would have been for the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and you cannot be more wrong in that respect. You have a Public Service Commission, Sir, and it can take 18 months for the Public Service Commission to get information about employees in a department. 12.40p.m.

Recommendations coming from Ministries are usually few and far between. Sometimes a Public Service Commission has to ask a Ministry to made recommendations to fill a post, if somebody has been acting in the post for seven years and nine years. That would not happen if there was a regime of public administration, or human resource development.

I have seen where people have said that various ministries or departments need a human resources division. But unless there is a central human resources division that makes sense, putting one in each department is only going to create more confusion. If you have a civil service that carries about 25 000 people plus the 30 000 people that the Honourable Member says he is going to bring in - but you have a good civil service, Sir, and you equip it with trained personnel, not people whom you cannot find anywhere else for them to go, you should have a requirement just as you have a requirement for an Economist I and an Economist II to have a certain qualification. The head of the service should have a certain qualification. In the Human Resources Department you should have the requirement of Personnel Officer I or II who should have the same professional training as in any of the other technical departments. Because, if we say in Barbados that our human resources are our best resources, then we ought to be attaching the same kind of care to how those resources are developed as we do to our financial resources.

I therefore feel that this is only part of where we are going, but somebody has got to take the bit and somebody has got to run with it and somebody is going to have to explain to the people of Barbados that the development of human resources is every bit as important, indeed more important than the development of any other resource in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is always desirable when we have these debates that we get them in perspective. I am not for one moment suggesting that the departments which we have are faulty or that there is something wrong with the individuals in them. You know, Sir, sometimes reports which go forth can be very misunderstood either by he who sends forth the report or he who receives it. The fact is that we have not got the proper infrastructure that is required to put these things in place. If we must have a Public Service Commission, then the Public Service Commission has to have its own resources without reference to the resources which exists in a department or ministry.

When the Department of Personnel sends a recommendation to the Public Service Commission it is the same Department of Personnel that has to assess the recommendation. And the Public Service Commission made up especially as it is in Barbados has no alternative really but to use its own individual experiences as they make judgments about what ought to happen or what ought not to happen. Even so, Sir, there can be no excuse whatsoever for some of the departments that are crucial to this country to be without appointments at certain levels.

Mr. Speaker, when I became the Minister of Health in this country the Assistant Matron was acting. The ten Senior Sisters were acting. Everybody was acting. It is impossible for us to have proper services if all the people at the top are temporary. If they do not know what is going to happen to them over a one, two, three, four year period, it is not right.

Mr. Speaker, if you were the Acting Speaker, Sir, you would behave much differently from how you behave now, because you do not know how the ball would turn if you aspired to be Speaker. But it is because you came in here as Speaker, it does not matter how much the Right Honourable Prime Minister might feel that you did not rule right for him, or how the Leader of the Opposition might feel that you did not rule right for him, they can do you nothing. Not one of us in here would bring a motion against the Speaker unless we give very deep consideration to it.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, he speaks of a perspective that I have not yet attained. There are only three of them in here who could speak in those terms. But, quite seriously, it is important, just as I heard the Honourable Member for St. George South making the point in here, a point that is universally accepted in legal circles that the law, as far as possible, must be certain, human resources in the public sector should, as far as possible, be certain.

One of the things in the United States public sector is that every little person working in a department in the Federal Government knows his or her rights in relation to the department. In the Police Force in New York, for example, Sir, it is well known that a person moving up to the level of Captain is going to be in a civil service position and no political judgement can be made of that person in relation to the performance of his work.

All judgments about the performance of work in the Fire Department, the Police Department and those various departments up to the level of Captain are determined in terms that have been set out. So you do not need, Sir, to have a Public Service Commission if the rules are so clear that you can go to court if those rules, in your opinion, have been violated. And that is the difference, if one could say there is a difference in the rule of law as it is perceived in the United States. And that is why you have so'much litigation. There are a lot of people who believe that there is something fundamentally wrong with litigation. 12.50p.m.

Public officers in this country may not know they have the right to go to court on certain decisions that are made against them. There is a time coming when young lawyers will draw to public servants' attention that if they are dissatisfied with a decision made that they can go to the courts. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West brought legislation in here which requires that decisions made in the public sector be made in such a way that transparency is real. Even to this day it is not understood that people have to give reasons for the decisions except it is two departments and there are some who feel that those two departments should not be part of the schedule.

Public officers do not know that they can take people to court. They can have a lawyer write and ask for reasons why they have not been promoted.

Mr. Speaker, one in this comment does not suggest that the public sector unions are not doing what they ought to do. I believe however, that the public sector unions themselves could do with some additional people in their departments. They can do with the odd lawyer or two on their staff so that they would be better served.

I have noticed one or two things which I find very interesting but if the people knew what they could know or ought to know they would probably not make some of the public statements they make. I have no doubt that as we turn the century and as more and more people become *au fait* with what they are entitled to, what their entitlements are that we are going to have more and cleaner discussions of issues.

There are some people who believe that you cannot criticise the judgment of the Court. There are some people who believe that if a magistrate or a judge passes a sentence and you think it is excessive that you cannot say so or that you have to be in the House of Assembly to say so. That is not true. In fact it is desirable that when the public sector makes decisions that the public for whom the decisions are made should evaluate those decisions and raise questions about them where questions are to be raised.

Were I familiar with certain things that happen in the courts I would be able to raise some other questions but I have no familiarity with that part of it but the part that I have familiarity with is the part that requires the use of the cells.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken on this because the Prime Minister has indicated that the Second Reading speech applied to all of the pieces of legislation before us. I took the opportunity to go beyond simply the amendment to allow casual employees to become public employees in the truer sense of the term but I will end by repeating that so far as those whom it is expected will benefit from this legislation they ought to be sensitised as much as it is humanly possible.

I hope that the sensitising will not be done in such a manner as to cause this Side to have to mount their steeds and come out like Sir Galahad because to the extent that there is any suggestion that this is a partisan decision, that this has flowed only from the breast of the do-gooders on that Side, then it would be necessary for us to set the record straight. I hope in fact that I have established beyond any doubt that this is a matter that has been pending for a very long time and that its coming to fruition is something that is acceptable to all of us.

I am glad that temporary to established posts is what is being focussed on and I hope that, arising out of that, that those officers in the public sector who have been languishing in positions be either dismissed from those positions, shifted out of those positions or appointed and I believe that 95% of them will be found suitable for appointment and I hope that the Public Service Commission will do its duty and call on the department to make submissions in those areas where there are merely lacunae.

I have not attempted to put any individual case but I think from my presentation that Honourable Members on that Side would be aware that there are in various departments situations which cry out for simple administrative justice to be done.

Finally, Sir, I hope that by this legislation we will be able to see the beginning of the creation of a human resource department which will address the public sector issues in a different way. I do not want to say a non-political way because in many of the jurisdictions certainly some that we copy they have been approaching these matters in a modern way for a long time and their example is there for the asking.

I hope, Sir, that as we head towards the 21st century we can expect to have a public sector that is going to be different. Certainly after the next general election we will endeavour to ensure that many of the things which I advocate here become full and complete policies. Thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 1.30 o 'clock in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak on this matter which is a matter that concerns a large number of people who are employed in activities in Barbados that are financed by votes of this Honourable House to various departments.

It is a matter which certainly in the last 30 years that I have been in politics and in and out of this House that cried out for reform. Although successive Ministers of Establishment and the public service have attempted both by word and action to alleviate discrimination and the injustices that are meted out and have been meted out to people, this is the first comprehensive attempt to deal with the matter subsequent to the passage of the legislation which created the Civil Establishments Act. I believe that was in the 1960s. Many people do not appreciate that Barbados was one of the few countries to have a comprehensive piece of legislation prior to independence which set out the relationship between the Crown and employees and the creation of the offices of the public service. That piece of legislation was revolutionary at the time because it placed in a legislative form the relationship for the offices covered by it and the Crown as opposed to the traditional relationship which is designed and devised by the exercise of the prerogative power of appointment.

I believe it is true to say that in the United Kingdom to this day the vast majority of civil servants owe their appointment to prerogative acts rather than to a legislative act as we have. As has been said, Sir, the Civil Establishments Act did not cover all of the employees who were paid for out of votes of Parliament, and the categories of employees and their conditions of service varied according to whether they were employed under the Civil Establishment Act or other bits of legislation.

For instance, a great source of appointments was the constitutional provisions which amended the Barbados Constitution when temporary officers were permitted to be employed by the political directorate of the day rather than by the Public Service Commission. It is not to say that with the passage of this legislation that all categories of employees will automatically come under it.

I think it is very important for people to understand that in our system of government it is necessary for some employees who are paid by the votes of Parliament to be employed under circumstances which the Public Service Commission or the Civil Service will not be the appointers.

There is a lot of talk made by the political directorate particularly on a change of government on a temporary basis. There has not been a change of government in the United Kingdom for a very long period of time but on the occasion of the last change of government there were a number of articles written on the large number of temporary appointments made by the new political directorate and there was a fair amount of controversy also as to whether these appointees should be in a position to be the principal advisors to the political directorate as opposed to the normal civil service.

Political reality dictates that a government of the day feels comfortable with those officers who will be advising them on sensitive political matters or indeed on sensitive economic matters. While the role and function of the civil service in relation to a number of these matters will be maintained nevertheless I want it to be clearly understood that nothing in this legislation as I see it will prevent the political directorate from selecting that small band of people whom they regard as important to their efficient functioning. Under the hierarchy now as I understand it they will be in the category of temporary officers appointed under contractual terms.

I also want to make it clear that there will still be particularly in the work departments as mentioned by the Right Honourable Prime Minister and others, temporary officers who are appointed to service the particular contracts which are being executed and when the contract is completed their role will be that they will either be retained in maintenance or their contractual relationship will come to an end.

I am acutely aware of this problem because I was a Minister of Civil Aviation when the Airport was built and I well recall the debate after it was completed within the Ministry as to what was the best way of dealing with the large number of people who continued on from the construction phase of the project and who were necessary to be retained to maintain and to service the new terminal and its machinery.

It is regrettable, Sir, that our civil service machinery functions so slowly that to this day, 1999, 20 years after the airport has been completed that some people are still there acting in an acting capacity. It is that type of person who will be exceedingly happy that this Bill is being passed.

Whatever happens we must recognise that there will be other projects of a similar type and while we may wish immediately after the completion of the project to have a period of time for determining what would be an ideal establishment, I would hope that in the future the provisions of this Bill will ensure that those officers selected whose functions will be permanent will be able to have no longer acting appointments but permanent appointments. 2.20 p.m.

As the Honourable Member for St. Joseph can tell you there were a couple of cases in which both he and I suffered from the ire of our supporters when we were unable to rectify situations which they regarded as great injustices. Some of them went to their graves hating us because we were not able to beat the system to ensure that one or two of them who acted for years in a higher position, all during the course of the construction of the Airport and who left the Service and whose pension after all of those years, one man in particular, 15 years, his pension under the Casual Employees Act, was calculated on the original post that he came in as and not on the acting appointment. That has been subsequently rectified in an amendment to the Casual Employees Act.

There is absolutely no doubt about it that injustices were done. As I have always said, Sir, I found out something. That perhaps some of the greatest injustices that are done in Barbados are not any injustices perpetrated by a politician against a civil servant. There are the injustices that civil servants perpetrate against each other. Because if you are in an acting position and there is an opportunity for someone senior to you in the department to inflict, for whatever reason, harm on you, it is possible for them to write on their recommendation a lot of things. Those things happen. Those of us who have been around know that you have sometimes to be a referee between what is going on in those departments.

Sir, I also want to comment on a point made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. It is a point that I have been trying to raise for as long as I have been in Parliament. It is a fact that the Minister of the Public Service has no accurate method of assessing the relative merits of various applications in the Civil Service for appointments as well as no accurate method to be update with the progress, particularly in the acquisition of new qualifications, of people who are in the Civil Service.

To this day, there is no computerised data bank of the number of applicants and their respective qualifications and no attempt is made to match the vacancies where people have applied. What is even worse is that the personnel files and the improvements that people undertake during the course of their careers are not readily called to hand through a computer or otherwise. People in the service...

Asides.

Hon. Sir. HAROLD St. JOHN: Up to last week I tried to do something and the Chief Personnel Officer told me, give me the name, let the young man from my constituency tell me when he applied because I cannot find the file and it will take me about two weeks to be able to find when he applied.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Well, he did help me in the end because I got his name immediately and the gentleman had the qualifications and he got the job.

Sir, we must be up-to-date in that respect. I keep saying, Sir, as a country we pride ourselves on being able to sell data processing services to the world. Yet still, in Income Tax, in National Insurance and in the public service itself, we just do not seem to be able to hire data processors to be able to perform these services. It is a remarkable position to be in and I trust that as we move ahead in our reform that the next revolutionary step that would be taken in addition to this because I regard this as being comparable to the original appointment of the vast majority of public servants under a specific statutory provision, namely, the Civil Establishment Act and Order. I regard this as comparable to that in the public service.

The next area that we have to deal with and I trust that it is readily understood, that there will be anomalies arising out of the implementation of this.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: There will be anomalies because that is the nature of the employment. There will be situations which are not envisaged particularly with the pensions provisions.

I remember in the early 1980s that a lot of thought was given to the concept of how we would integrate all employees in Barbados as far as pensions are concerned because they are different ages which triggered eligibility for pensioners. The public service as a rule was 60, the statutory boards, some of them were 65 and some were 60, hence you had the problem, which is being effectively addressed here where after 1971 and after 1975 various categories of employees derived some of their pension from a tranche

from the National Insurance supplemented by the Government and others only deriving their pension from the National Insurance.

As a result of that, it meant that there was a class of people who had reached the retirement age under the regulations dealing with the public service but had not reached the retirement age under the National Insurance Act. So there was a hiatus. Five years in which people would only have got gratuity, I believe, in order to mitigate the impact of the National Insurance that a gratuity was granted. That is also a source of great concern to constituents. I am sure that Honourable Members in here have a large number of them who come to them quarrelling all the time. What am I to do between 60 and 65? I know that a study was done and it was felt that the National Insurance could not come down to 60 and that the Government itself, since it was a contributor to the National Insurance Scheme, it could not be expected to keep people on to 65. I believe, that in order, again, to mitigate the impact, that it was permissible for some offices between 60 and 65 to have a contract. I know that that took place.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Well, that is the point. I am reminded that only people who have particular skills or connections would be in that fortunate position.

That has to be grappled with sooner or later and I know that this matter will be dealt with after consultation with the representative of workers and indeed it should be dealt with on the basis that this is not a matter which would be the subject of any partisan political approach. All of us would like to see the most desirable conditions for our public employers.

I see here that the annual salary of one of the lowest employees in Government, money wise, a maid is $14 253. When there is all this talk about inequality between people in Barbados, it could not obviously apply in the public service because this talk of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, cannot apply. Because the variation between the top civil servant or the top politician and the lowest rung of employee is not ten to one. That is a unique position because I do not know of the top levels of civil service receiving $ 140 000. Even in Communist countries like Cuba and others, the ratio is far greater than that. I do not know what is this talk about the gap between the top and the bottom. Not in the public service. It does not occur in the public service and the public service is the largest employer in the country. I believe that is still true to say.

Sir, my last point in welcoming this Bill and I am supporting it, would be to explain also that it is not always understood that in our constitutional arrangement, that the Government, the political directorate is responsible for the terms and conditions of service. We are not concerned with discipline. The political directorate....

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: We are not responsible for it in the sense that you can initiate, you can complain but you cannot execute.

There is an article in the House and it is a very excellent analysis of the particular relationship between the civil servant, the Government as employer and the distinction between discipline and conditions of service. It is an article under the heading "Caribbean Public Service Reform", January 1995 and it is by a Carla Herbert. She is the legal draftsman and Law Reform Adviser to the Ministry of Legal Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said it is Lord Diplock in a judgement in the Trinidadian case of a police officer Thomas and the Attorney General of Trinidad in which he made it abundantly clear that the commissions do not replace the Crown as employer and that the terms and conditions.... 2.30 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: St. Michael West, Sir, I am sorry, I am always confusing between the two, Sir. It is such a hard area, Sir, there is not much distinction between the two of them. It is a well-known area. When I came into politics we could not have a meeting in Parris Gap. I would not like to have one now, Sir, even although we have passed 30 years. That is what the Jamaicans would call a Garrison. The Honourable Member should not take any comfort from that fact because he does not know how the boundaries will be shaped.

So, Sir, this is a good article because it analyses in a very clear way this distinction between the two. As I understand it, in the future, once these employees are now elevated to the position of being public servants their security of tenure would be greatly improved but they will be subject to a new disciplinary regime.

The last point of course that I would make, Sir, is that as usual I am very glad to see, Sir, that the Government is giving those officers who are affected by this legislation the usual choice. This is very important. People are entitled to make the decision after it is properly explained to them, as to whether they stay on their existing terms and conditions or move into the new terms. As far as I am concerned any constituent that comes to me for advice I would tell them that this is so vastly superior, particularly for young people who have not been in the service for a long period of time.

Sir, before I sit down I would caution and I know, Sir, that special effort should be made to ensure that all of the officers who are affected would be given as much information and assistance as possible before they make that decision. Thank you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution to this debate and I expect that I will not be too long on this particular matter that is before us now, the Civil Establishments (Amendment) Act as it is termed in the short title, 1998.

It is a pity, Sir, that this House does not get many opportunities to discuss in a broad non partisan way the establishment, functioning and the efficiency or lack thereof in our public service except on occasions when some very technical issue comes before it and we have to look at the amendment to any of the pieces of legislation that relate to the Civil Establishment in Barbados.

I entered this Chamber, Sir, today to hear the Prime Minister and the Member for St. Peter referring to the Byzantine labyrinth that one has to meander through in order to understand the workings of the public service. I think that if anyone who can simplify those operations, if the present Prime Minister can do it or when within the coming months he hands over the reins of Government to his successor, his successor will be able to do it, I think that would be a significant contribution to the public administration in this country. At least he would have tried, Sir. But perhaps it should not be surprising because if you are dealing with appointments, promotions, transfers, discipline for over 25 000 persons....

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Productivity issues, the Prime Minister reminds me, a host of other matters, it is not surprising that complexity would be the order of the day because you are not only dealing with the legal framework, you are dealing with structures, you are dealing with myriad personalities, you are dealing, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church South indicated, you are dealing with animosities and frictions among people and good old fashioned human nature.

I believe there was one writer, Graham Wallace, I believe was his name, who spoke about the role of human nature in politics. We are at the start of this century and, Sir, we have to bear these things in mind. We speak about the Civil Establishments Order but in our case, Sir, I believe it includes not only civil but some military people because we do not have a separate military establishment as such, even though military law and the law relating to defence, the Defence Force, they have a kind of a separate trap through which they operate but the funds are still voted under the general funds that are available under the Minister for Defence and Security.

I want to indicate, Sir, that successive governments have struggled with this particular problem, the problem of trying to improve the public service of Barbados particularly as it affects appointments, promotions, transfers, discipline and training. I have tried, Sir, but there are some very hardy problems that come up and I am not sure, Sir, if the number of complaints have increased or decreased or are about the same but the fact is that people have problems, they have complaints and I do not believe they are satisfied that the existing arrangements for getting their particular problems or grievances assessed are as easily assessed as they would wish. And perhaps that is something that we should turn our attention to. But there is not going to be any significant improvement in the administration of our country and in the performance of our country unless we can improve the functioning, the management and general arrangements in respect of the public service. They are the permanent establishments. 2.40 p.m.

All of us in here are temporary. And some sit back and say, "all right, you have your way. You have your say. We will be here when you have gone." And some say that as soon as there is a change of Government, we will rush in with our best schemes and we will get those implemented by the incoming Government. So we will wait. They can play a waiting game and what may be of importance, you will get up and say it in a Budget or elsewhere that this should be done, or that should be done and then you find a kind of a creeping paralysis takes over the phrase,

> "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise."

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: That happens too. Not generally, but let me say, I have had the fullest cooperation from the Public Servants in Barbados while I had the responsibility for these areas. I am not making and cannot make any general complaints of that nature, but I know that it happens. And if we have different entities doing different things, we have the Ministry of the Civil Service, the Public Service Commission, the Personnel Department or however it is styled, the training divisions and a whole host of different entities, then the Minister responsible has to bring some kind of coordination to that complex group in order to bring purpose and direction to the development of the Public Service.

But I welcome this particular piece of legislation, and we are going to support it, Sir, to the extent that it will bring improvements in the Public Service, it will give greater security of tenure to officers who may lack that security and

to the extent that it may increase morale and therefore boost productivity in the Public Service. I only hope that terms, in such terms as it is expressed and the purpose and intent of the legislation would be clearly explained to the Public Officers and their representatives.

I have known in the past that pieces of legislation have been put on the statute books and people have made wrong decisions which they regretted afterwards and then have had to seek some means of changing their position because they did not fully understand what the legislation intended to do.

It may appear simple to those who have responsibility for it, but for those who have to live with it they may not understand it and I would hope that, in simple language, there are clear explanations given to the Public Officers as to what this is all about.

I wish to make the point, Sir, that this effort to bring into the establishment persons who have been acting in positions, who have been in temporary positions - the terminology is so different to affect different categories of workers that sometimes one can be forgiven if one does not recall them all - but you have temporary, you have casual, you have non established and unestablished and there may be other categories as well, Sir.

As for me, Sir, I have been unestablished and disestablished and everything for quite sometime. So it does not really matter. But I can speak. I have Public Officers who live in my constituency. I know Public Officers from all over Barbados and I know that they have problems and that they would wish to see that some improvement to their condition is made. But I want to make it clear that this must not be cast into some political innovation.

Sir, the fact is that this is just one other step in an ongoing process, not only to improve the conditions for those who hold established posts and those who are acting, but those who are unestablished or non established or casual or however they are styled. And I do not make statements lightly and I want the figures to be known.

Previous Governments, Sir, have brought Civil Establishment Amendment Bills before this Chamber and they have been passed into law. This is not the first one, Sir. It is a continuing thing that is the responsibility of every Minister who has held the position of Minister responsible for Establishment. He has a duty to bring those kinds of legislation...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Do you mean the kind of paper it is printed on? Well, you can get the difference in quality that way. Yes. They all tend to follow the same kind of form or format, Sir, so I do not know what the difference in quality would be.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I am trying to refresh my own memory, but it is said that we have some very short memories.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I do not have access to the information, Sir, and I do not have any public officers around to remind me or jolt my memory, either from the Ministry of the Civil Service or from anywhere else, personnel office, human resource, but I know, Sir, and I believe that almost 1 000 temporary posts were placed on the permanent establishment while I had responsibility for these matters.

I am willing to give way for the Prime Minister to give me the exact number.

Aside.

2.50 p.m.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Now that is different but on the establishment nearly 1 000 temporary posts were put on the permanent establishment and in addition to that we increased the staff both for the Royal Barbados Police Force and for the prison services. Then the other conditions of service for the reform and extension of pensions for the casual employees and the known teaching staff in some of the secondary schools, all of that, Sir. These are things which we have done.

That is what we did. More than 3 000 employees of some statutory boards by the Casual Employees (Amendment) Pensions Act and the members know that we have made a significant effort to do this. There are other pieces of legislation - the Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act in 1989 and the Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1990. That is the background so I do not want any member to get up and give the impression that they are more pro public service than we are.

While we are about it, let me ask what has become of the General Orders. I recall that I left on my desk a revised General Orders for Barbados for the public sector and I know the Government would wish to look at it again but I wonder what has happened to it because we did a considerable amount of work on that.

I think if we are going to go along without these things surfacing and I would like it to be known and I am sure in terms of integrity and truth that you will come out and say considerable work was done in these areas. When it comes down, do not come and say, "Oh yes, we have brought this out." Let us understand and know that this is work that has been done.

Sir, I do not wish to go through the whole but I would want to make a plea for the Government to use the human resources that it has at its disposal in a much better way. There is no point bringing people under the establishment and those people seek to improve their qualifications and experience and then they are shifted into areas which make it well nigh difficult or impossible for those acquired skills to be utilised.

There are many examples of this happening. We have had about four persons at least qualified, trained, who were on the staff of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who were divorced from their jobs. Now that is a loss to Barbados. There are other examples as well and I believe...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:... The trouble with you, Prime Minister, is that you like to give lashes. You were in your glee in the last hour of the last debate in this Sitting but you do not like anybody to say anything that affects you or your government. You cannot take it when it is given.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I have not called upon any person to give any explanations. Let me make that clear. The only persons I will call to give an explanation are those who have responsibility and are accountable to this House. That is all I would say, Sir.

I would ask for a greater use of the human resources of this country and in this particular matter again I hope that all criticisms which tend to surface within the public service that we will be able to reduce those criticisms and those grievances which may exist.

With those words, Sir, I will conclude my contribution on this particular matter and I join the Prime Minister in-commending it to this Chamber.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and Minister responsible for the Civil Service and indeed the entire Barbados Labour Party administration must set their faces like flint against those who would suggest to them that they ought not to trumpet abroad, to boast and be proud of this significant initiative on the part of the public sector workers in this country. I wish to say nothing Mr. Speaker, that would take away from the contribution which the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South made during his tenure as leader of this country in improving the lot of public servants.

At the same time, his effort, as indeed the efforts of previous Minsters responsible for the Establishment, were piece-meal efforts. The Right Honourable Member for Christ Church South in his one year as Minister of the Establishments brought some 850 to the permanent establishment of temporary /casual workers and as we have just been reminded by the last speaker during his tenure of office as Prime Minister of this country and Minister of Finance he brought a thousand or thereabouts under the permanent establishment.

This particular Resolution which we are seeking to have approved today is not only all embracing but this will immediately and positively affect some 5 000 workers. All unestablished temporary workers will now be put on the established staff and be given pensionable status.

The full implications of that step ought to be spelt out not only for the benefit of the House and the Press but for the benefit of all Barbadians. What we have had in this country over many years is really a dual status in the public service. You had second class public service employees and many thousands, maids, janitors, masons and carpenters and labourers across the whole spectrum of the public service and you had the first class public servant - first status they enjoyed - who had tenure of office who, to use the expression of one of our national heroes, were fire-proof.

What it meant was that they, the first-class civil servants, did not have to work in a setting of anxiety and insecurity. This is a very important difference where every day you knew that you were at risk, that you could lose your work on maybe twenty-four hours notice. Indeed, that happened to an appreciable number of janitors at the Grantley Adams Airport, some of whom were working there from the very opening of the new airport some 20 years ago. About five or six years ago they lost their jobs overnight. They were just called to the office and told that next Friday would be the last. So they lived in a setting of anxiety and insecurity.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, many of them have not been able to secure credit from the commercial banks in Barbados in order to improve their housing stock to borrow money in circumstances of emergency and to live like-others in the society simply because the Manager would say to them, "You are at work but you have no security of tenure. Much as I am kindly disposed to you and would like to help, the Bank's money is not my own arid we have very clear instructions against lending on any long-term or even short-term basis to temporary employees."

Aside.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: That is absolutely correct, the description here given by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. They constituted in every sense the working poor and the working disadvantaged. This is what this measure will do for them. It will remove that insecurity. It will remove that anxiety. It will give them that security of tenure where they can relate to the commercial houses in Bridgetown like others in the public service. That second class status will be removed.

I really hope, Mr. Speaker, that it positively impacts on the motivation and the morale of the public service because we too often get the feeling that the public service is somehow a place where morale is low, where somehow the motivation of the employees is affected and adversely so and that we are not getting the best out of a class that really represents some of the finest skills in the country. I hope that this measure will go a long way to releasing their energies and improving their morale, their output and their efficiency.

The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has pointed out in his introduction of this measure that it was not easy to bring us to the point which we are at today. He and his advisors had to walk as it were through a maze of legislative measures which constitute the framework within which public sector employees at all levels operate in Barbados.

The point I wish to make here is that it is not fair either on the part of those who have to manage public sector employees or to the political class that that situation should continue much longer.

The time has come therefore for us to have a comprehensive overhaul of the legislative framework affecting the appointment, transfer, promotion, discipline and remuneration of public sector employees so that we do not have to make our way through this maze of legislation ranging from the Civil Establishments Act and Orders through the Statutory Board Act through to the many Pensions Acts on the Statute Book and so on.

I hope that the Minister responsible for Establishments will set in motion a comprehensive study that will lead to the reform of this legislative maze. I believe that he can get the assistance of the ILO and I hope that he will move in that direction in order to ensure that in another few years we have one or two pieces at most of legislation really affecting all public sector employees .

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is not the only thing that will be achieved by this Resolution and indeed it is not the only thing that is needed if we are to improve the productivity and the efficiency and the morale of the public servants. There has been a feeling for a long time resulting from this first class, second class dichotomy to which I earlier referred that the civil service was an unfair place. Many employees in the public service deeply believed that the civil service is an unfair place where reward, promotion, transfers, training opportunities, none of these things is really determined by merit but by all sorts of ascriptions and other considerations which really makes it difficult to plan your own career prospects with any certainty.

I am disappointed in the fact that until recently and I say until recently, based on the correction which the Right Hoftdhrable Member for St. Peter did offer to my friend, the Right Honourable Member for Christ Church South when he was making the point that there is no inventory of the talent, the skills, the training available in the public service. I know that to have been the position up until a year or two ago and I would be happy if indeed that has been corrected.
3.10p.m.

Although we are spending vast sums of money every year and they have been doing it for many years on the improvement and the broadening of the range of skills, the acquisition of new skills by public servants, at no one time could the Chief Personnel Officer or anybody in Establishments tell you, we have x number of persons who are in the public service with Upper Second Class Honours Degrees or First Class Honours Degrees or 30 people who are trained in one particular area, 40 in another area or as the case may be. That is an obvious reflection of inefficiency.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for the Civil Service must move with despatch in ensuring that that particular department of Government is strengthened so that there is a rapidly increased feeling of fair play on the part of the employer to those employees in the public service. To a large extent, it has to do with human nature, the very point made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Many years ago I had reason to intervene, in fact it happened on more than three occasions, with the Chief Personnel Officer to enquire why is it that particular persons were working in the public service for 12 years and 14 years and they could not get appointments. All of us who dealt with them gave them high marks for their commitment to duty, their loyalty to their employers, to their efficiency, to their courtesy in dealing with the public, to their professional skills and yet they could not get any appointments.

Two different Personnel Officers told me after investigating the matter and correcting these injustices that he is distressed to have to tell me that the head of the department, year after year, made representations for the improvement of his office but had nothing to say about any of the employees in his department. That he himself had never heard of their plight and was totally unaware. Something has to be done with the system of reporting and the system of review and monitoring in the public service whereby there could be a pervasive feeling that consideration of merits apply and that one is treated fairly in the public service of Barbados.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that one of the first things that we must do is really have a full time Chairman of the Public Service Commission. What happens now, as I understand it....

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Clearly I agree with the Right Honourable Member that we will need to have the right person. I believe that our country can throw up the right person. I have no doubt about the capacity of the country to

throw up the right person. We must look hard but there are right persons available.

Right now the position as far as promotions are concerned goes something like this. That members of the Personnel Office will determine that two names will go forward to the Public Service Commission for appointment to a particular post. They would have recommended x very highly over y; x and y are the two names and x will get the appointment. Because it is a part time Public Service Commission with the Chairman carrying one of the heaviest loads of administration in the country, there is no time to say, but how did we arrive at the two; x and y? Why is it that there are 100 persons who came into the public service at the same time as x and y and there is no mention of them? How did they get excluded and how did we arrive at x and y? What was the criteria employed in arriving at the short list? If he had the time he could say, give me the 30 or 40 files relating to those who came into the public service about the same time and who have made progress over the years and let me examine those files and see each of the persons involved and determine who should be on the short list and who should get the appointments.

Because at the highest level, there is no supervision of the short list process, and of the process of recommending x over y, there is a widespread feeling in the public service that sometimes a Mafia is at work and that people are excluded for reasons totally unrelated to their merit and their capacity to contribute.

Those of us who observe the" civil service closely and have done so for the last 30 years get the feeling that often the best people are not coming through to the top. That there is stifled in the centre of the public service, a lot of able people and good talent and that there are not getting the opportunity to come through to the top. That feeling of unfair play, that perception of injustice must be removed if we are to get the best out of our public service.

The Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South has been making the point and as 1 understand his point and I fully support it, if we do not have an efficient, contented public service possessed of a wide range of skills, experiences and discipline, they can over time, if not immediately, act as a bar, a hindrance to development in this country. In the end, the quality of the public service may determine the pace at which we develop in this country.

It is important that we have a contented, well motivated public service as established staff. There are there always, we are birds of passage. We ought not, however, to minimise our own contribution because we are hard in here one to another and one with another but the real truth is that we must take great credit and by we I mean the political class, for the development that this country has made in the last 50 years. It has not been the church that has made the contribution. It has not been the Lions and the Rotary Club and the other clubs of Barbados. It has been the political class and at the end of the day we must recognise our contribution to both sides, the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party and other political parties too over the years.

There was until many years ago, the Conservative element, the Barbados National Party, the Mottley group and so on. They never held office in the last 50 years but they add to the body of ideas which help to fertilise the system and to that extent, we ought not to deny their contribution.

This Resolution adopting this Order will remove considerable anomalies and they have been some tear-compelling anomalies over the years resulting from this two-fold status to which I earlier referred. I just want to give the illustration and this is just one of many, of a gentlemen who for 15 years at the Airport worked in the position of Superintendent even though he came in as a casual employee he was acting over time for J5 years at the level of Superintendent and when he retired, he was Superintendent but he was pensioned as casual employee at the lowest level. That is one of the most tear-compelling anomalies that the system has produced.

Within recent years that particular situation has been corrected. Whenever I see him, I take to flight because, much as I am still disposed to treating him kindly, he used to make representation through me and he would say openly, I do not want to see you.

That is one of the most extreme of the illustrations of which I can think of and there have been many. There have really been many. 3.20p.m.

Now, the point has been made, Mr. Speaker, and 1 think it needs to be emphasised that a considerable amount of public education and public relations need to attend the passage of this Order and I hope the Minister responsible for public information, the Government Information Service, will ensure that there are several programmes and that the organs of public information will be invited to participate in the education of the workers and of the public of Barbados with respect to the implications of this Order. It is sufficiently significant to be the subject of several articles, to be the subject of panel discussion, not with a view to scoring political points but with a view to explaining the implications and the full meaning of what it means for the workers of the measure that we are passing here today.

It is important too that the options be made available to all those who are affected as to whether they want to become pensionable, permanent employees or whether they want to remain as they are. Because if for example a person is 63 years old, a year or two from retiring and they came into the system before 1971 and they are likely to get an NIS Pension

and also a pension from the public service, it may be in their interest not to opt at this late stage to become an established pensionable employee and that is why it is important that the full implications be explained to them. And in that regard it is not only the organs of public information, the GIS, but it is also important too that the trade union representative should be made aware and I hope that a session or sessions can be arranged for them at all levels, shop stewards, field officers and so on, so that they can help to explain to the many persons affected, almost 5 000 what will be the implications of this measure.

I just want to say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that central to this question is the question of pensions and only last week we were debating the question of pensions. It remains an area in Barbados that cries out for serious further thinking and recall. The integration of the private pensions into the public pensions scheme, the circumstances under which one can opt out, the anomalous situation needs to be addressed whereby in the more enlightened parastatal organisations there is a private pension scheme along with the Government Pension Scheme. In many others like the Transport Board, as I understand it, there has not been any scheme for years at all. Those who work in the Defence Force get no pension. They do not qualify for pension. All these are cruel anomalies within the system that impact on us as representatives of the people on a daily basis. It is perhaps a task that is outside of the competence of any single officer or unit within the Government but we can get help from abroad to put it on a just basis and I am appealing to the Minister of Establishments to make sure that he sets in motion the machinery that will put the pensions scheme on a just basis.

I was distressed when recently a lady outside of the constituency but a fellow Barbadian who has been disabled by an accident and who made a large contribution to the income in her household came to me and among other things she was explaining that her husband who worked in the Defence Force was asked to retire as a standard in that sort of establishment at 48. It is unusual for the Brigadier, he himself says, at his age to be still around because normally you do not go beyond 50. You lose your fitness and it is not normal that as a defence establishment you are around beyond 50. But here it is that having given some of his best years to the Defence Force he does not qualify for pension and he has to start afresh at 48. Sunset is ahead of him and he has no pension and he now has to start to build up one. That is a cruel anomaly and it ought not to be allowed to persist.

When I was at the IDC I insisted on it. I did not want 30 years from then to be walking around and find people who were working there and who were pushing out their hands saying Skipper, could you give me a ten? I said, no, it did not make sense that the Government at the central level was making no provision for us let us call in the Insurance companies and let us have a pension scheme.

At IDC, after 10 years, it becomes vested in you and that scheme continues to exist and I am disappointed that at the Transport Board there was never any such scheme and in several other parastatals. The real truth is that many Chairmen of parastatals in this country do not quite understand the range and the extent of power which they possess by being in charge of an independent statutory corporation. They can do much more for their corporations and for their employees if they would appreciate the large amount of power which they have and the opportunities for good which they possess. 3.30 p.m.

I agree, Mr. Speaker, that we, too infrequently, have an opportunity to debate in a non partisan way, our public service. Considerable reforms are needed, particularly in terms of giving a feeling that one gets justice as an employee in the Public Service.

I welcome this measure, Mr. Speaker, I have been one of the most vigorous voices, if I may say so, on this Side, over the last 25/30 years asking for precisely this measure. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter will tell you that since he became Prime Minister I must have spoken to him about one dozen times on this particular measure and I am delighted that it has come to past. I am proud of the fact that it came to past under our watch, the Barbados Labour Party watch. And I hope that, as I said earlier, the full implications of this measure are brought home not only to the public of Barbados, but to the 5 000 persons directly affected.

I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, this debate is generally, I think a very good one, although the day is dark and sombre and the tones have been subdued in here, people have still focussed very well. I am particularly enjoying the comments of many Members but I think that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph spoke very well.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I want, Sir, to cast my own comments in this debate in two general terms.

One, to speak very brief to the package of incentives for civil servants and the improvement of their conditions generally that they have enjoyed as a result of specific policy and other initiatives by this administration since September of 1994 and two, to speak to the wider issue of civil service reform.

It is a reality that because of the very existence of the problem that we seek today to attempt to correct, that what existed among certain levels of civil servants even though they work for the Government, was a permanent underclass. So defined, Sir, because as we speak in terms of two Barbadoses, they were persons who were locked in the

parameters of the two Barbadoses. They were persons who even though they worked for the Government of Barbados and MPs know that people seek after Government jobs with great keenness, but the reality is that those who are Government employees, the benefits that one thought would inure to all Government employees did not inure to them.

Prior to this arrangement that we are seeking to put in place. Sir, a person who was a maid, would have left the Government Service with a gratuity of $12 060.91 and a pension of $8 552.28. As a result of these measures, that same individual will now leave the Service with a gratuity of $29 695.42. More than double what she would have previously got and a pension of $7 126.90. So even though the pension is slightly less, the reality is that the gratuity more than doubles, compensates for the fact that the pension is slightly less. To express it in dollar terms is in my view to say in real terms what this can mean to the quality of life that that individual could have enjoyed post retirement.

And we see many of our old people, because of the fact that the dollar is no longer worth 100 cents because, over time the changes in the value of currency that a lot of people, once they retire - and this is not only true of middle class people, it is particularly true of people who are elderly, poor and live in our lower socioeconomic groups and communities.

There are persons in Barbados who do not go outside of the middle class enclave in which they live. But those of us who walk the streets of Barbados and go into the highways and byways and into our constituencies know that there are a number of people who live in very difficult circumstances. And it is this kind of stay home package that can make the difference to the type of retirement that any single individual, leaving the Government service in the levels of jobs which this particular Legislative enactment speaks to. It is a difference in their quality of life and the quality of life enjoyed by their children and grandchildren that we really are dealing with in this House today.

It is important to speak to this matter of improvement of the quality of life, not only during their retirement years but the fact that this will be will, because of the nature of the social arrangements that we have where it is likely that a maid who is retiring will be caring for grandchildren and children who are still living under her roof, some of whom when the parents are at work or if they are not working or left the country and migrate to New York or wherever the children are with her and often the substandard responsibility for their day to day care falls on that grandmother and that pensioner. And if she has more money to take home in her pocket, whether she uses this money to invest, whether she just leaves it on the bank to accrue interest, or whether she applies it in some sensible business scheme of her own, or some other entrepreneurial activity. Because a lot of those women are selling pudding and souse or doing fish cakes or barbecue chicken or selling fish or pork chops and making pone. A lot of them are engaging in some form of economic activity to help to maintain themselves at the standard at which they were working and to maintain these grandchildren and children for whom they continue to care in their post retirement years.

When we express what they are going to be having in dollars and cents then we get a feeling, not only as other Members in this Chamber have spoken today, for the number of people who will be affected in this change of status, but in fact for what it means in terms of real dollars. And that is what you spend in the shops. That is the harsh reality.

Having said that, I would wish to make the point and I think I have done in here before that post September 1994 the Government has come to this Honourable Chamber on a number of occasions to bring benefits for the Civil Servants of Barbados which have substantially improved their overall terms and conditions. And I am going to attempt to go through some of them. Not in any particular order, but to set a framework to show that what we are doing today, represents a continuum of what we started to do in September of 1994 since we came to the House and Government and what we attempted to do in a chronological and structured way since 1994.

There has been improvement in relation to the quantum of money available for persons entitled to car loans. This moved from $20 000 to $35 000 for the first loan and for the second loan from $16 000 to $35 000. Now that is a significant change because even with the reconditioned market you can pick up a new car for $35 000. But the reality is that when you are getting less than the $35 000 it meant that several finance companies had to hold the Bill of Sale or even when you got the $20 000 you still had to look for more funds to be able to purchase a car, even a youngish second hand car. And the increase from $20 000 to $35 000 really makes a number of new cars accessible as well as the reconditioned car market which is so popular because the cars are so flashy looking. But also because of the depreciation of the Yen in some instances, and previous Budgetary measures in this Chamber, I think either the 1995 or 1996 Budget we have seen that the price of new cars have also decreased. I would conceive that that had to do with the competition from the reconditioned cars.

Persons like, post-persons who are entitled to motor cycles, their loan amount moved from $3 000 to $5 000 and they can now get the motor cycles free of duty. Vehicle loans instead of getting car you are now also entitled to buy a jeep, because it may be more convenient to you because of the nature of the work that you do. If you are an engineer or a technical officer and you have to go on certain sites, a jeep would be more practical. And the repayment period has been moved from five to seven years.

There are also benefits relating to the productivity bonus, benefits relating to staff who were laid off having been returned to work, benefits relating to pensions and so on. But I promised when I rose that I would speak and be quick, Sir. So rather than give a synopsis of the myriad benefits I would wish very briefly to turn to the matter of reform within the Civil Service. 3.40p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph in the course of his comments spoke on the issue of reporting and the kind of...

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am told that outside is so flooded that we must rush to our constituencies to give various forms of relief. In that case, Sir, I will not burden the Chamber with the rest of my comments in this regard. I am obliged to you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Chief Information Officer that Barbados is on a flood alert until midnight tonight and an area of disturbed weather associated with a tropical wave is affecting the country. It is good that the House is in a mood to continue its business but I would urge a sense of expedition in the way in which we proceed because we have to do the business of the people but also we have to do the business outside tonight.

I am very much, Sir, always aware of the political implications of flooding. I thank the Honourable Member for St. James South for having given way but she can be assured that she will have another opportunity to speak in a fullsome way on this matter.

Just to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I thank members for their contributions. A number of pertinent comments were raised. A unit has been established in the Ministry of the Civil Service to treat all aspects of this matter pertaining to casual workers and the House will recall that earlier in the last financial year a supplementary was brought to the House to establish a special unit in the Ministry of the Civil Service to speak to this matter and that unit will be handling not only the preparation of legislation but all of the administrative arrangements to make sure that this matter goes into place.

I do not want to delay the House. I just want to beg that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. J. M. EDGHILL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Rt Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 11 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) ORDER, 1998

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for St. Michael East, you are not in your regalia and I would hope that you put on your coat, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Your Honour, Sir, I am not feeling well. If I stay in here in the air conditioning -1 am informed that I can have a spare jacket but if I keep that on I am looking for trouble.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You should have informed the Chair if you are taking off your coat.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: My apologies, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your explanation is taken by the Chair. Right Honourable Prime Minister!

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had a debate covering this issue and I beg to move that this Resolution be passed.

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

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

ORDER NO. 13 - SECOND READING OF BILL TO AMEND CERTAIN ENACTMENTS RELATING TO PENSIONS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this arose out of the amendment to the Civil Establishment Act and I move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Honourable Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. J. M. EDGHILL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 9 - SECOND READING OF THE INSURANCE (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL, 1998

Rt. Hon.O. S.ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the course of a recent presentation I had indicated that there was some, if not uncertainty, some concern about the standing of the offshore financial industry arising from the fact that all across the world there are major attempts being made to make all financial services subject to strong regulatory oversight and subject to the scrutiny and the application of strong practices in relation to regulations. And across the world there is the great concern that offshore industries should not be used as vehicles to facilitate fiscal evasion and that artificial rates of taxes or discriminatory rates of taxes should not be so applied as to make offshore industries both different from similar offshore industries but also to constitute important avenues for tax evasion.

We have recognised the need to begin to address this in our own industry because as the record would show in 1997 there has been a slackening off in the registration of new entities in the offshore financial industry.

It is our judgement that the problem of ensuring that the offshore financial industry cannot be successfully challenged on the grounds of its discriminatory practices or on the grounds of it having at its core taxes and tax rates which are artificial. It is our submission that this should be approached by putting in place a regime that allows for a conversion between the offshore and the onshore industry.

You will recognise, Sir, that we are about to introduce mutual funds legislation both for domestic purposes as well as for international purposes and we will have one Mutual Fund Act that would provide for all mutual funds to be answerable to one lone regulatory system. This will help us to avoid the question of discriminatory regulatory regime.

In a similar way, Sir, the House would be familiar with some of the challenges that our offshore insurance industry has faced in various jurisdictions in recent times. And what this piece of legislation is intended to do is to bring about a conversion in the way in which the two industries, the exempt industry that caters to the extra-regional markets and the onshore industry that caters to local industry are regulated by making provision that domestic insurance can write international business. And when they do so they will be entitled to the foreign exchange credit that arises from selling their services internationally and they will be entitled to all of the exchange control liberties that attend to doing international business and making it possible within the same law that the existing offshore industry can register not under an artificial tax rate but register such that it can qualify for the foreign exchange credit under section 12A of the Income Tax Act and therefore be operating under a piece of fiscal legislation that is open to all industry and not created especially for one particular industry hence dealing with the issue arising as regards artificial tax rates, but also to allow the international insurance industries resident in Barbados to be able if they wish to underwrite local business but if they do so to have to register under the Insurance Act and be subject to all of the prudential norms - insolvency tests, capital adequacy ratio and whatever else that attends to writing local business.

Effectively, what we are saying is that a domestic insurance industry can now do international insurance business and benefit from all of the tax credits exchange control liberties that go with international business and that an international insurance company registered in Barbados can ostensibly and in principle under law now do local business but you would have to comply with all of the regulatory provisions pertaining to local business.

I do not want to set this in the context of any specific challenge posed by any jurisdiction because very sensitive negotiations are taking place right now and we do not want a view to go forward that we are just structuring something artificially. We are not.

What we are seeking to do is to put a new set of insurance arrangements in place to allow for the conversion of the industry. The offshore financial centres will only exist in the future in accordance with the new rules of international trade if the discriminatory practices are removed and particularly if the industry is made subject to strong regulatory systems. This Miscellaneous Bill sets in train a number of consequential amendments to specific pieces of legislation to bring about the conversion.

The Income Tax Act obviously will be amended therefore to allow for the writing of insurance business to qualify as a service for the purposes of applying section 12H. The Insurance Act itself will be amended. The Property Transfer Tax will be amended. The Stamp Duty Act will be amended and the Value Added Tax will be amended.

What the legislation does, Mr. Deputy Speaker is that it sets out in the Schedule in column one the various Acts that will be amended and in column two the various amendments that will be instituted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this piece of legislation has been widely canvassed by the industry and they are entirely satisfied with the provisions. It has been the subject of intense scrutiny by the Advisory Committee on International Business and as I said it is very much in the tone and temper of similar legislation that we will be introducing in the House to bring about a conversion between other forms of international business.

The House will recall and this is by way of illustration that in 1995 the Barbados insurance industry faced a challenge from the Canadian legislators, but the solution that was at that time thought to be found to that ended up in a zero rate of tax which does not have good standing in the international law as a serious rate of tax. 4.00 p.m.

We are satisfied, however, that the approach specified in this legislation that will allow for the convergence of domestic and exempt insurance industries will supply the security of the future of the industry and will remove a lot of the uncertainties that has, in fact, caused a little slow down in the rate of registration in recent times.

I am still, Mr. Speaker, very confident that once the right safeguards are made at this time that the industry can have a healthy future and we have to make sure that Barbados' reputation as an international financial centre based upon a clean, strong, regulatory system, remains at the core of our effort in Barbados.

In that context, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would have loved to be able to go into greater details but I remind the House that there is a flood alert and I would have wished not to have to rush this but this is a matter that I would like to come back to because we really do have to put in place mechanisms to make sure that the future of our off-shore industry is above serious challenge. The way towards that future is increasing the convergence of the domestic and the international and I commend it to the House in that spirit.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be long. The Opposition is not opposing this particular piece of legislation because it has been our view that one of the constraints to the acceleration in the offshore sector has been the slowness with which legislation has come forward particularly with true funds legislation. We are very happy to see where that applies to domestic mutual funds. There is a need for those new products because you cannot coast on the same product that we have been dealing with. Some of them, in the case of IBCs, actually were introduced as far back as the 1960s and a lot of people do not realise that. The foreign sales corporation complimented a very old exchange of information agreement from 1978, I think it was. Again, these are old vehicles which we have exploited late but having exploited them, there are only so many configurations which you can bring to Barbados as corporate structures and so on to benefit.

The sector is also faced with intense competition. In St. Vincent, the Government passed five pieces of new offshore legislation in one afternoon as a package. In other countries in the Caribbean what is happening in Barbados is being noticed and even though they do not have the relationship that we enjoy with countries like Canada, they are seeking to develop their own niche and many of our Caribbean countries have actually leased the offshore sector to private companies. You have Belize for example which has almost leased the sector to Michael Ascroft's companies. Bank of Belize and Belize Holdings, they now run the sector. There are countries which bring in big law firms and tell them, you set it up and we will give you a certain time period in which you will have exclusive use of our jurisdiction.

We have a different kind of offshore sector but at the same time, we have developed it very fairly. I must say that within the context of CARICOM because I think at one time there was always the understanding that Barbados was pursuing this almost alone but now, as I have said, we are facing tremendous competition and it is vital for Government to expedite the process of getting the legislation for the new products which are going to sustain and further the development of the offshore sector.

The second point relates to the position of regional insurance companies. I am extremely reluctant to support legislation although I am going to support this for other reasons which would enhance the status of non-regional insurance companies over regional insurance companies. Not enough has been done to put regional insurance companies on the same footing throughout the region. In fact, there are some countries which offer better concessions to foreign insurance companies than we do to our own. We have been fooling around in CARICOM with respect to insurance companies. In fact, the whole business regime, harmonization of law and procedure and so on but in particular when we are talking about insurance companies, we are talking about the mobilisation of the savings of Caribbean people. Therefore, there needs to be a region-wide policy and it needs to be implemented quickly. What we are essentially doing is giving the companies which are involved in operations here and in a sense are localised, privileges and benefits which are not intended to Jamaican insurance companies, to Trinidadian insurance companies and so on. The regime needs to be sorted out.

Many years ago, Barbados signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Trinidad and it was very good to see that in that Memorandum of Understanding insurance services were highlighted as an area where Barbadian insurance companies should be treated in no less favourable a position than Trinidadian insurance companies. A few years ago, we had the Life of Jamaica Manufacturers Life scenario.

Fortunately, the Government still has some leverage so it was able to direct the outcome of that matter but it did so in a situation where the regional insurance companies were not on the same footing.

I make an appeal to the Honourable Member for St. Peter to focus on getting CARICOM to get that region-wide regime for insurance companies. You cannot have the development of a regional capital market when the institutions that mobilise most of your long-term financial resources are not operating at the level and with the same benefits and concessions.

The last point I want to make and that brings me to the other point which is that if we do not do that soon, you will find, as 1 have found that if you are locked into financial arrangements like overseas credit cards, not the ones that are sourced domestically, which you hold, you get all kinds of offers for insurance services at much more competitive prices than are being offered in the Caribbean. We may end up by dilly-dallying and allowing those foreign insurance companies, which they are going to be able to do anyway shortly, to access our market and provide tremendous competition for local insurance companies.

We will support any efforts that the Government makes in this regard but I make that plea on behalf of those companies. I have a funny feeling that the Jamaican insurance companies would have been much better off had we ten years ago started to get in place that regime for insurance because of the risk which they face operating exclusively in the Jamaican market with some outpost which really do not do a lot of business and certainly none in Barbados. Without those effective interlocking relationships it is hampering the development of the sector.

We have no problem in supporting this piece of legislation.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to say that I cannot rival the Honourable Member for St. John about the knowledge of the workings of regional insurance companies so I will yield to his superior wisdom on that matter.

Sir, just also to say that the question of the regional insurance industry is the subject of a CARICOM Task Force. Our recent amendment to the Insurance Act was based on the CARICOM law but we do need to put in place harmonised policies relating to pensions and other matters.

It really does underscore the need, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we really need a regional, not a CARICOM Secretariat like the one that we have with a few people. We need a serious, strong, regional Secretariat where this work can be taken and energised on an ongoing basis rather than become the subject of intermittent concern by Heads twice a year as happened to be case in point. 4.10p.m.

The process now is when the Heads meet and somebody remembers that you have to bring up something, this is the way it functions. But the point is very well taken, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would also go so far as to say that a large part of the financial crisis in Jamaica could have been overcome and their response to it would have been more sensible if there was some system in place by which there could have been a process of consolidation and mergers in the insurance sector in Jamaica rather than they having to report to the extraordinarily expensive experience that they have put. The comments are well taken in that respect.

I just want to say, Sir, that whether it be in insurance, whether it be in mutual funds, whether it be offshore banks but more especially so in the area of international business companies we will have to allow Barbadians to own international business companies and our regional entities when they are conducting work in the international arena. The legislation right now is limited. A Barbadian could only now own 10% of an international business company. So if a Barbadian developed a software programme and wanted to commercialise it internationally and he was to set up an international business company he would have to find somebody from outside the region who would hold 90% of the equity in order for him to be able to sell that through international business which is nonsense.

We have, Sir, to bring a new approach entirely to all of the existing legislation and I say that, Sir, because I want to stress the point to the Honourable Member for St. John, it has not just been a question of bringing new legislation but we have had to rethink legislation even as we were attempting to bring it. We were wishing to bring a mutual fund for local industry, a mutual fund for the offshore industry and then given the pressure for the removal of discrimination we then had to revert to having one consolidated legislation.

I will make one final point, Sir. Barbados' reputation in this field depends upon our clean image as a place where legitimate business and only legitimate business is conducted. I know very often, Sir, there is a haste to bring new products and new legislation and not to ask the relevant question of who you are getting into bed with. Barbados should always resist the haste to introduce not just new products but to establish new partnerships in this field or

have new ways of doing business in this field that would undermine our image as a place where legitimate business is conducted.

In the final analysis, Sir, Barbados will survive any international scrutiny about money laundering and our offshore industry will rise above that challenge because our laws are so drafted as to really not just create the perception, Sir, but to be rooted in the reality that this is a jurisdiction where only clean business will be attracted and where only clean business will be supported.

So this is a great challenge for us. Sir, this is what development is about because people understand that the sugar industry from time to time has had to be diversified to cope with changing international conditions but a sector that has been established for us as recently as 20 years ago is now facing a great challenge to its survival and our response appropriately must be to introduce new ways of managing the sector to enable it to continue to enjoy its niche in the market but also to prosper as international conditions change and this legislation, Sir, is in that vein and I therefore beg to move, Sir, that it be read a second time.

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

On the motion ofRt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon Miss B.A. MILLER, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. J.M. EDGHILLin the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

Clause 1 was called and passed. Clause 2 as

amended, was called and passed. Clause 3 was called

and passed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1998.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have asked for Government Notices to be recommitted in order to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of $20 930 113 from the Consolidated Fund to be placed at the disposal of Government to supplement the Estimates 1998-99 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 1.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had earlier advised the Leader of the Opposition that we were going to give notice of this Resolution and would wish to have it debated this afternoon because we are still hoping that the House could rise for its recess today. 4.20 p.m.

ORDER NO. 15 - TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE INCOME TAX (AMEND-MENT) (NO. 2) BILL, 1998

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is just an amendment to the Income Tax Bill to give effect to the proposal to introduce registered retirement saving plans which was the subject of extensive debate a few days ago and I do not propose to revisit a matter that has just been debated.

I beg to move, Sir, that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

On the motion ofRt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. Miss B. A.. MILLER the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. M. EDGHILL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House in now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 5 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion ofRt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER the Chairman reported to His Honour, the DEPUTY SPEAKER, the passing of one Bitt in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion ofRt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed and so cited.

ORDER NO. 8 - TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVES ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF BARBADOS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, No. 8 on the Order Paper -1 would like to move that this

Resolution be withdrawn in that the substance of it is now subsumed in what is being referred to as 8(b).

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question that Order No. 8 be withdrawn and a new supplementary be substituted. If there are no objections, so agreed.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. J. M. EDGHILL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF $20 931 113 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 1998-99 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 1

HEAD 13-THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE $2 690 198

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, this is an omnibus Supplementary, Sir, and I thought that in introducing it I should first of all say, that these are expenses in which the Government will have to incur before the House resumes in November. And, in every instance there are expenditures which were not, either anticipated at Estimates, nor could not have been properly gauged at Estimates.

This is an amount, Sir, for $20 million, but there is no attempt here to expand Government's capital projects. In most instances what we are seeking to do is to pay bills that have now fallen through or to deal with things and I will explain.

The largest part of this $20 million supplementary is a requirement for $6 million to pay the Venezuelan Company Inversiones arising out of the decision by the then Government to examine the contract that had been entered into by the previous administration to carry out a subsidiary road programme. The matter has now been settled and we now have to pay $6 million to Inversiones of Venezuela for a tenantry road programme.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, $6 million is for Inversiones, $5 million is for the Transport Board to meet the job evaluations which have already been agreed to. There are $3 million here, Mr. Speaker, to allow us to begin to meet the cost, and this is a serious one, Sir, with the Mobil remediation. The Mobil site is in a woeful state as you would imagine after having been used as an industrial site for many years. It is intended to go into alternative occupation and it has now to be cleaned up.

We have been negotiating with Mobil as to the carrying of the cost of this remediation, but the money has to be spent now to do the remediation. The situation is getting worse and worse every day and $3 million of this $20 million is simply to allow us to address that matter and the understanding that the Government does not feel it is right to have full cost of the remediation borne by Mobil.

Two point six million dollars ($2.6 million), Sir, is intended to allow us to complete the repairs of the Trident which is now in Miami. This is an absolutely necessary function.

Sir, everybody who had to use the Registry knows that the Registry based on the old system has been a horror.

Asides

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: And among this $20 million supplementary is the amount of $ 1.4 million to allow us to be able to finish the computerisation of the Registry.

I feel that Barbadians should be able to feel that they can go to the Registry and get basic information within a d° or two or without having to wait five weeks and the Regisi must be computerised and this will enable us to do so, Sir. 4.30p.m.

We have provided an amount in the Estimates to clad the exposed state at Sherbourne, to paint it and put the place in a proper order on the way to finding the best use for it, Sir. The $1 million that was put in is not fully adequate and we are now putting in $151 000 more to finish the cost of painting and whatever else. That is part of it.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of the Civil Service has taken over the responsibility for the development and management of a Smart Stream human resource management application project to do precisely the kind of things that members today were calling for in relation to information about public servants and that is being provided for together with cost of the moving of the Ministry of the Civil Service which has had to move from Government Headquarters and together with the cost of implementing this human resource management software. They are introducing a new Smart Stream human resource management application software to allow it to do precisely the things that members today cited as deficiencies. That, together with the relocation is going to cost...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am not going to speak again. You can speak afterwards.

The other matter, Sir, is that there is provision in here as well to cover the cost of the advisory commission - $400 000 odd and $591 000 is to allow the Ministry of Public Works to finance the overlay programme between Searles and Six Roads. Those, Sir, constitute the purpose for this supplementary.

As I said, Sir, in almost every instance it is just a question of our bringing to account expenditure that has to be met. I beg to move, Sir, that Head...

I am coming back now to focus in that broad context on Head 13. This money is to be used only for the purpose of doing repairs to the Trident and to the refitting of it and letting it come back to perform its central role as the core of our navy and it is expenditure that was not fully anticipated in March but we now have to spend it and we want to have the Trident back as soon as possible. We cannot wait until November so I am bringing this account now.

I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am a little concerned about the Prime Minister's casual attitude towards this whole question of national security. The amount of money he is asking of this House, $2.7 million to refit the navy of this country -I am concerned. We are discussing our vital affairs. Do you mean we do not have a navy? He gets up casually and dismisses $2.7 million.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, in deference to your distinguished elevation in this Chair I will not go into certain matters .which would create unnecessary difficulties in certain circumstances but I think the Prime Minister has been quite disingenuous to treat the $2.7 million in the cavalier fashion he is treating it.

First of all, I would like to know if the Trident went to where it is now on its own steam or if it were towed there. It is a matter he has to report on. Was it towe*[4] here or did it go on its own steam?

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Suppose we had to go to war, more particularly supposed we are called upon to defend ourselves? Our first line of defence is now languishing in some place up in Florida. I read in the newspaper that a whale washed up on the shores of the East Coast. No defence against a whale washing up!

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Could you please address the Chair?

Mr. B.M. TAITT: Sir, I made the assumption that the Chair had...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I am addressing the Chair and I was asking the question. Your colleague... Not your colleague. You have no colleague when you are in the Chair. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South raised questions about whale soup which are not relevant when we are discussing national security. I do not see how whale soup could be relevant to national security. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South who has experience in these matters should know better but Your Honour did not hear him and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew should know better.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think the Honourable Member should get to the point. You are going overboard.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am going to address the issue. I wish to ask the Prime Minister if when we did the Estimates - the Prime Minister is no mean forecaster - why is it that we did not know at the time of the Estimates that the Trident would need repairs? Why are we now requiring $2 million plus - he forced me to ask these questions in this way - to repair the Trident? No one knows where the Trident is. I have heard speeches in this House about our preparedness against drugs and Your Honour has forced me to focus on these matters.

Why are we now only coming to this House at this time to raise $2 million? Where is the Trident? The Honourable Member was not specific about where the Trident is. He was not specific about what is being done to it. He was not specific about who is doing it and I am hearing words from over the other side about Miami and or Hennessy. Well, Sir, the Deputy Prime Minister has some experience in Hennessy which I am not prepared to discuss because Your Honour would say I am overboard. I wish to raise a question as to why has the Prime Minister come to us and not given us details about the Trident?

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I wish to draw to Your Honour's attention that when the Trident itself was being bought by a former Barbados Labour Party Government and you may check the record they misled the country on the purchase of the Trident. The record is there, Sir. 4.40 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Under the circumstances, I will not detain the House. They are prevailing against me that we have a lot of work to do but I think that I have fired a shot across the bow and I would have preferred to see some of our more sustained presentation about our security. We are naked now, Sir. The George Fergusson is dead, I do not even know, do we have any ship at all, Sir? Are we just simply without any defence?

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member -is signalling that he will let me know what defence there is, so I will sit down.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the question of the presence of the vessels that are responsible for guarding the country and where they might be and when they have to go for repairs and where they are, Sir, are not things that you want to....

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: No, it is not secrecy but there are not things that you just speak about, Mr. Chairman. I do not think that we would necessarily have to tell every drug bandit that the Trident is not going to be here and when it is going to come back. Members on the Defence Board would know that you do just what has to be done and do it as quickly as possible. That is all I am going to say.

In this particular matter, Sir, we made a provision in the Estimates. As you can see Defence rose from $20 million to $22 million. The amount is insufficient because once the Trident has gone to where it needs to be fixed, the inspections has indicated that far more work needs to be done on it than we had in fact initially anticipated and there is simply no way that the people preparing the Estimates themselves can be fully seized of what needs to be done in terms of the re-fitting and the overhauling of a vessel that is as old as the Trident.

I wish, Sir, quite frankly, that I did not have to spend this money on this kind of purpose at this time. My hands has to be wrung to get this kind of cash out of me for this purpose.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: We would love to be able to buy more relevant vessels soon but again, Sir, the revenue is simply not there for us and we are not interested in getting, by way of loans, from other friendly countries, the kind of vessels that they want to lend us money to buy, that are not suited for the purpose, Sir.

The Defence Board, however, has asked... in fact, I should not go into what the Defence Board has asked because that is a matter for National Security, Sir. Just trust us that we are trying our best to make sure that there is no break in National Security. The Attorney General has already indicated on the Floor of the House to allow joint patrol of the beaches between the Defence Force and the Police and that those joint patrols will continue for as long as we feel that there are necessary in the interest of the security of the country.

Just to say, Sir, that we wish we did not have to incur this expenditure but it is expenditure that is going to be well spent.

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

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

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move, Sir, that Head 16 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 19- MINISTRY OF FINANCE & ECONOMIC AFFAIRS - $3,090,800

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: As I have said, Sir, this is to help with the cleaning up of the Mobil site and I beg to move that this stand part.

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

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

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY GENERAL - $1 639 524

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I have said that we have started the process of computerising the affairs of the Registry. It is very important and we need to finish it so that we can get a proper Registry. I beg to move that this expenditure stand part.

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

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

HEAD 35 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOURISM & INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT- $151 000

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in begging to move that Head 35 stand part, I simply reiterate what has been said that the $1 million voted was to clad the exposed steel at the back of Sherbourne. We have virtually completed that now that the rains have come in. There is plastering and there is painting that has to be done because of the height of the building, the scaffolding, assembling and taking down and reassembling and so, we have run into this extra expense.

I beg to move, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that Head 35 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 36 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH &THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Ministry of Health seeks a supplementary in the sum of $502,864.00 in respect of the functioning of the Haynes Commission into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I want to make it clear that the Commissioners themselves will not be remunerated, that they are all giving this as a public service to the people of Barbados and I think that we are fortunate to have persons at their level and skill from so many various sectors, willing to serve at this time and to give of that service free. It is the kind of work that normally attract very high paid consultants and we have been able to call on the services of a number of Barbadians to obtain a 'home-grown' solution to a national problem and concern.

Essentially, the sums being sought will be applied in this way. The Commission is using a building which is in a poor state of repair and some monies are needed to effect some refurbishment and make it fully habitable for them. That is going to cost $90,486.00. In respect of that sum the building is also being used by a number of individuals, professional groups within the Ministry of Health and in the health services generally and NGOs for making submissions, for one sort or another whether oral or in writing or who are coming in because comments and suggestions are not just being called in, but people are actually going to the offices and having meetings with the Commissioners.

There is a further sum required and that sum is $412,378.00 which will largely be used for payment for support staff and services. They have had to had the benefit of shorthand writers and secretarial support. They are going to be having public hearings and they are having a large number of people sending them documents. A lot of these have to be analysed and collated and they have to be stored in some form and an analysis of them have to be done. There is a certain support staff that the Commission needs in order to be able to function, hence the sum of $412,378.00 which is needed largely for that.

We have had to take on rental as well. Equipment to facilitate the Commission - tables, chairs, desk, computer equipment particularly hardware, fax machine and the usual sort of office furniture and equipment that would operate in a modern office. In respect of staff, they have asked for and have been given administrative offices. A person who is involved in doing such research as they might consider necessary, they have had to be given a Stenographer/Typist staff person and somebody to clean the office and, of course, they had to have stationery and cleaning materials.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: There is some money of the sum being sought which will go to Shorthand writers but not all of it is for them.

If I may turn, Sir, having dealt with the sums which we are seeking, to look a little more closely at the Haynes Commission itself.

The Haynes Commission, Sir, is a commission of Barbadians of all political persuasions and skill levels whom the Government is relying on to help us find solutions to the problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which are deep and entrenched. Many of the problems of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the problems of long waiting times in the Accident and Emergency, the problems of breakdowns in equipment and so on have dated back many years. 4.50p.m.

I am being urged, Mr. Chairman, not to speak at length but I have all the material here and depending on the nature of the comments made on the Other Side...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, could you please proceed?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I really would not wish to resume my seat. On the last occasion when I spoke during the Budget, at the end of my comment I made a document of this House Minutes which showed essentially the state of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at March 1994 many months before we came to Government.

I have also on a previous occasion gone back, Mr. Chairman, to review the problems. I did make it a document of the House on the last occasion. I did point out that as far back as 1990 and leading up to 1993 there were a number of articles in the newspaper which reflected the state of the hospital and reflected the nature of public complaint being made against the hospital.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member seeks at every opportunity to break the Rules of the House. A series of articles in the newspaper. As soon as she says that means that they are irrelevant. This House has rules which say that you cannot refer ...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, on what point of order did you rise?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: A point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is breaking the rules of the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is not a point of order. Could you take your seat?

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It is wrong for the people of Barbados who have been using the hospital for years, who have been accessing the public care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, that the problems at the hospital relating to long waiting time in Accident and Emergency, that the problems relating to equipment failure, that the problems relating to nurses, the problems relating to human resources, problems relating to appointments, call for the establishment of a Board to manage the affairs of the hospital. Shortages of medical staff in the Accident and Emergency Department, all of these are problems which go back, not only pre 1994 but certainly those Barbadians who want to remember will recall quite well that these problems go back into the 1980s. There are problems of considerable antiquity.

It is also a reality that as I indicated last week the budget at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was reduced by some $ 10 million so that in 1992-93 the budget at the Hospital was less than it was in 1991.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have pointed out on more than one occasion that where there is an international agency making funds available for a project the Government is required to vote the amount of that project up front. When the project is completed those funds are no longer part of the current budget, therefore for the Honourable Member to suggest that a reduction in the amount for the estimates for the year ...

This is about the fifth time she has tried, Sir, the Speaker has rejected her on this. It is improper to suggest that there was a reduction in the services of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital when in fact there was an adjustment of the numbers because the project had been completed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point of order is taken. Proceed.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you very much, Sir. It is a reality, Sir, however the Honourable Member for St. Michael West seeks to rationalise it, that in 1992-93 the Queen Elizabeth Hospital budget was cut by $10 million which made it less than it was as much as two years before.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. To say the budget was cut is a misrepresentation. The Budget was not cut. The reduction in numbers is not an indication that the budget was cut. In fact for the services the budget was increased. The numbers in the Estimates will show a decrease because the international agencies project had been completed. It is a misrepresentation to say that the budget has been cut. The record will show in any analysis that there was an increase for the services.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point is taken. Could you proceed.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Let me just give the House the figures. In 1991-92 the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's budget was $67 508 362. When the structural adjustment period hit and the rest of the social services votes were being allocated and reduced one saw that the vote of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital went from $67 million to $57 755 479. That is the reality of the figures. Those persons who access the hospital can determine whether or not there was an appropriate or commensurate decline in quality of care, in services, in the state of the physical plant and equipment so much so as I said in this House before and as I have made a document in the House that by 1994 ...

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order, Sir. In 1995 the Minister of Health delivered a policy statement to reduce the expenditure at the QEH by $4 million. 5.00 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am demonstrating that the Honourable Member is currently misleading the House because she is suggesting that anytime there is a so-called reduction in expenditure in any Ministry that it will constitute a reduction in services provided. And, I am saying that that cannot be true because in 1995...

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I repeat that the Minister of Health is suggesting, the Honourable Member for St. James South, that a reduction in the budget of any Ministry is indicative of a reduction in the services provided.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course she is saying it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your point of order is taken. Could you proceed?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course, I am explaining. In 1995 the Minister of Health as a policy statement reduced the budget at the QEH by $4 million and she at that point and time said that that meant that there will be better and more efficient management of the finances at the QEH. All I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that if you are saying that a reduction in the Budget constitute a reduction in services, then you have to be wrong. Because this Minister is on record as reducing deliberately, the budget at the QEH in 1995.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point is taken. Could you proceed please?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West must bring the record. The Honourable Member is alleging that the vote to the QEH was cut in 1995. I would wish to share these figures with the Chamber.

In 1994/95 the original provision was $58 450 207, supplemented t>y $3.5 million, bringing it a total of $61.988 million. In 1995/96 the original allocation was $63 853 648 with a supplementary of $10 294. There has been no cuts to the QEH budget since we came to office. So it is an inaccuracy which I think is deliberate to say that I reduced the budget at the QEH. But I believe that this is an attempt to distract me. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, bring the record to this Chamber if there is a record. He cannot just allege it without supplying figures and facts to support his allegation. Particularly when we have the Estimates of this Honourable House to refer to.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Of course in 1995 in the Estimates debate, the Minister...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point of order is taken. Could you proceed Honourable Member for St. James South?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Minister must recall that one vote for the Drug Service was cut by $4 million and the argument used at the time was that it could be done with the cut. And if the Minister does not recall then we should wait and send for the record to determine whether or not there was ever a cut. It-was subsequently supplemented during the same financial year. But there was a cut and Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am sure that you can recall that there was a cut.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point of order is taken. Could you proceed?

Certain remarks made the Honourable Members for St. James South and St. Michael East were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: So the Honourable Member for St. Michael East moved from the QEH to the Drug Service giving dopey information and inaccurate information in the process.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Could Honourable Members allow the Honourable Member to speak so that I can also hear what is happening. Please proceed.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir. The Estimates of this House will show the figures. But I want to turn, Mr. Chairman, to some of the initiatives that have been taken at the Hospital to improve conditions there since we have come to office. Because, I will not allow it to go on the record that we have come in, things were bad and that they have remained unchanged. We have during the course of the last four years for the improvement of meals and quality controls introduced a completely new system.

We have put in place new systems for the ordering of supplies. We have sought to improve the accounting system and the process by which accounts and supplies are sourced. We have sought to put an air-conditioning maintenance programme in place for the 356 air-conditioning units and/or refrigerated pieces of equipment which exists at the QEH. We have improved the mechanical and electrical maintenance systems by putting in place an ongoing maintenance programme for equipment. Because the Minutes of 1994 showed that none existed. When we came to office...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot mislead the House by saying that something in 1994 showed that none existed. There is a study that was commissioned by the IADB and was directed by Pan American Health Organisation which left in place a programme for effective maintenance. And the Honourable Member was then the Minister thereafter.

So if none is in place it is because the Minister did not follow the programme that had been left. She cannot get up and say that none was there.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point of order is taken. Could you proceed?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Prior to September 1994 the evidence showed that the number of complaints in relation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital had been increasing significantly and that we were settling an average of eight law suits per year.

We have sought to put a mechanism in place for complaints handling. In respect of the improvement in the programme... 5.10p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Do I understand the Honourable Member to be saying that in 1994 there was an average of 8 law suits? The Honourable Member cannot mislead the House. There were none in 1994.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: We have introduced a new joint, hip and replacement programme. We have introduced laparoscopic surgery. We have increased the number of dialysis...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! The Honourable Member for St. Michael East, could you desist from shouting across the Floor?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: We have put in a new vacuum pump to improve the condition in the operating theatres. We have put in a new gamma-camera which is a high-tech piece of diagnostic equipment valued at $1.1 million.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, On a point of order. The Honourable Member is quoting from a document and I wish to insist that that document be made a document of the House under the Standing Orders of this Chamber. She has been quoting extensively from it and she has not made any doubt that that document is being quoted from.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Could you tell me what document is that?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Yes, Sir. I am using my personal notes as I am entitled to do as Minister. The files come to me and I pull out the information.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes, she is entitled to that. Could you proceed.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, On a point of order. Those are not personal notes.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. John, the Chair has ruled. Could you please take your seat and let the Honourable Member proceed.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There are Standing Orders.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair made a ruling on that point so could you please take your seat?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am asking you, Sir, to consider the submission that I have made to you that if I stand up and quote a document in my hand and I am quoting in the context of that document then it means that you have to apply the Standing Orders. It would be unfair...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is speaking. The Chair has already made a ruling. Could you please take your seat?

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: What ruling? On the basis of what?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Member for St. Michael West, could you behave properly in this Chamber? Could you behave in a civilised manner? Could you proceed!

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: We have put in a new oxygen concentrator at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which has again to do with the quality of oxygen that will be used with certain types of equipment. Of the existing elevators...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members for Christ Church East and St. John, could you please keep less noise so that I can listen to what the Honourable Member for St. James South is saying?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: In respect of the lifts that were being complained about, when we came to office there was one particular lift which had been bought new and has rotted.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time has almost expired. You have about another minute.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Of the eight lifts at the Hospital seven new lifts have been installed and there are now seven new lifts that are all working. We have repaired the roof which was leaking. We have done repairs to the pathology lab and the A &E. We upgraded certain parts of the entrance. We have completed the refurbishment of wards Bl and 2. We have put in a room for the safekeeping of psycho-toxic drugs. We have started a complete replacement of windows at the Hospital. There are a number of other measures which given the time left to me I am not able to give. I would urge that Head 36 stand part.

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

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Resolution before the House seeks financial support for the Commission which has been set up...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Members for St. Michael West and St. John, would you like to listen to your colleague? Proceed!

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I anticipated that this Resolution would have brought some degree of controversy to the House in the sense that the Minister by her explaining to the Parliament of Barbados that she is indeed in full grasp of what is going on in the Ministry of Health as relates to the Hospital is clearly explaining to the House why there is no need for the support under this particular Head 36 for the Ministry of Health and the Environment.

The Minister seeks to indicate to the House that the present administration is in control and that they have in fact been aware of all of the problems associated with the Ministry of Health and the QEH and yet this House is being asked to debate a Resolution for some half million dollars for a Commission to determine the problems associated with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and then to advise Government on how to proceed with regard to the delivery of health care to Barbadians at the QEH.

Mr. Chairman, there has to be something fundamentally wrong that a Government in mid stream that came into office...

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: ... that is true. At the end of their term. ...came into government on the slogan, Vote for a Change. They argued that they were aware and the Minister presented documentation and said that she was aware of the state of affairs at the hospital. The document that the House was made aware of, did not speak of all of the ills at the hospital. It certainly identified some of the functional problems and certainly sought to make recommendation ** to how improvements could be made in various services that are available at the hospital. 5.20p.m.

The Minister was seeking to convey the impression that the state of affairs of the hospital in 1994 was in such a state, as if today we can just simply accept that it was bad in 1994, so you have no argument whatsoever on it.

That is not true. The Minister must be aware that during the period 1991 to 1994, even though we went through a structural adjustment programme that significant develop mental work took place at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital including the setting up of the Cardiology.....

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, on a point of order. To say that there is significant developmental work does not really admit to the fact that none of this equipment was paid for until we carndl to Government and that is a matter which is on record in this House. Bring the 1996 Estimates...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yoifr point is taken.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I will ignore the comment and indicate that serious developmental work took place.

Now, the Minister has come under severe attack and in this document that was presented to the House - this is a document from the Ministry of Health signed by the Permanent Secretary and sent to the Hospital Director at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In the document, it says, to give you an example, that it is no good for the image of the hospital or the Ministry to continue functioning in a haphazard and unplanned manner. Listen to this comment, Mr. Chairman: "The hospital has three fully trained hospital administrators in place."

If I take that one comment, it tells the story of destruction of an administration who in 1994 found a scenario with three fully trained administrators functioning in an arena....

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I would wish to draw the Chamber's attention to the concluding paragraph which is the most telling:

> "Finally, I expect that you will meet with the other Directors, the Deputy and the Assistant to review the problems being experienced and that together we will work out strategy which will enable the hospital to be managed effectively and efficiently."

That shows that there was no effective and efficient management and that the Permanent Secretary had to call on the managers to meet and discuss hospital problems. That shows that the problems were not being resolved and that they were not even speaking to one another. That is one of the things that is telling about this document.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point of order is taken. Could you proceed.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The point that I am making, Mr. Chairman is that the hospital had been handed to the Barbados Labour Party in a state of improvement. We recognised the problems over the years that are associated with this institution and all over the world you will find problems associated with hospitals. Rather than focus on continued development, the new administration sought to

tear down the profound work of the Democratic Labour Party for cheap political gains to create a scenario of mass confusion that everything done by the Democratic Labour Party was so bad and that they had to prove a case.

Now that you are the policymakers you cannot determine for yourself what the policy should be so you have to call as the head of a Commission, an individual who the Barbados Labour Party lambasted for 20 years and all of a sudden you trust this individual and his advice. Advice that you condemned for 20 years. It is amazing how people all of a sudden because it suits them, can all of a sudden decide that there are going to take the advice of certain people.

This Commission is an indictment on the present Minister of Health. It sends a message to Barbados that the Minister and the Government of the Barbados Labour Party do not understand., are not willing to understand and have interfered with the proper functioning of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That is alright. You can bring whatever you want to bring.

I can understand the Minister's discomfort because the Minister must be embarrassed because this could not have been a Commission that was sanctioned by the Minister. This was a Commission that was imposed on the Minister. It was imposed on the Minister just as the review of the Greenland Landfill was imposed on the Minister.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: We are talking about health so I can talk about anything. And it is relative because would you believe that we are spending $0.5 million on a Commission and today at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital patients have to use plastic forks because they do not have proper forks at the hospital. Today, they are using plastic forks and we are spending $0.5 million.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I would just wish to note for the record that this year the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was voted in excess of $81 million, the largest vote ever in history and in fact, Mr. Chairman, Sir, large amounts of supplies are brought in and it is a question of how the hospital hemorrhages and where these supplies go. The fact that they are using plastic forks is not an indication that there were not provided.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, the Minister is indicating in the language that she is using that there is stealing going on at the hospital and the institution.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: She never said stealing. She said leakages or hemorrhaging.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Well, forks do not walk by themselves, so the Minister will have to be saying that people carry away the things.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you have a scenario where people in Barbados today are being denied proper delivery of health care despite an increased budget over 1991/92 of almost $25 million. An increase of $25 million and yet when you compare the delivery of health care during the period 1991 to 1993 we can safely say that it is distinctly worse in 1998 even though there is an increase in supplies. We cannot mix any matters in this country. Something is fundamentally wrong. There is mass confusion.

When you examine that we are coming to Parliament for a supplementary when the Government has so far to date spent $30 million on a landfill that they cannot open and it is now likely as a result of recent studies that they will have to spend a significant amount of money again...

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is very relevant because I have to decide whether I want to support this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, could you please stick to the Head?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, we are talking about money and I have to decide whether I am going to support this. I have to understand what is involved. I have to weigh the pros and cons so I have to look at the amount of money that has been spent on Greenland and on the South Coast Sewerage Project.

Mr. Chairman, I asked questions in this House that would have saved this country this kind of money and we would not have to come before this House for a supplementary. I asked this question in 1995: To ask the Minister of Health:

> "Will the Minister state whether her Ministry's decision to site a landfill at Greenland, St. Andrew, was informed by the result of scientific studies and an independently conducted environmental....

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. There is a Resolution before this House. The Honourable Member is seeking now to go into another part of the Order Paper.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Honourable Member stick to this Resolution?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, the Resolution tells me that we are dealing with the Head 36, Ministry of

Health and the Environment. It deals with Object 212- Other Operating Expenses and this covers the entire Ministry.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, that is not so. This Head is dealing with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and not with Greenland and you have to stick with what the Head is. You cannot go beyond that and talk about Greenland. Please stick to the point.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am making the point that it is a question of expenditure. We are in a Committee and we are trying to determine whether we can support a supplementary. I have to make the point and point out to the House and to guide other Members why they must not support this.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is a question of whether we have faith in their spending. I am not using Greenland because I want to talk about Greenland. I am talking about Greenland because I want to make the point in relation to the cost and I have asked Parliamentary questions which clearly identify cost related matters that should have been addressed and for 3 years the Minister would not address one single question and last week they had the results of a study where they put dye in at the Greenland landfill and they now ... 5.30p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, would you listen? Could you get back to the subject matter. We have had sufficient on Greenland.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am saying, Sir, that as a result of that exercise this country will be asked again to foot a bill probably in excess of another $ 10 million and then we have to come before the House for these kinds of supplementaries. Total wastage when the Minister should ask questions and be guided and it is an indictment that we have in 1998 to come in here to approve a supplementary. I am offended by it and we cannot just sit and approve willy nilly these matters because of the mistakes of a Minister. The taxpayers of this country must not pay for the mistakes of a Minister. You have made mistakes and then you come into the House of Assembly and argue that you want to set up a commission to tell you what to do when you should have come to this country in 1994.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You said you had all the facts then. Well if you had all the facts why do you now have to set up an enquiry. The entire government needs to be brought down on this one issue and it is very likely that the taxpayers of the country will judge you very harshly.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I did not anticipate speaking in this debate but having sat here and listened to the Honourable Minister and I heard her copiously speaking about all these things that she has done and her references to things that were supposed to have been done made me believe that she knew all the answers to the problems at the hospital and obviously, not only the answers, she therefore knows the problems. It therefore follows that if she knows the problems and she knows the answers why has she come to Parliament today for nearly half million dollars? This is a first form problem. Why has she come for this money? Why are we establishing a commission if the answers are known? If the problems were identified since 1992 why is she coming for this money?

Today, Sir, we have come here to vote for this money. I figured, Sir, that I would have voted for this money because we are still groping around for answers to these problems but apparently, Sir, we are not groping around. The Minister is fully aware of the problems and she has the answers, Sir. So there is no need for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. Therefore we ask the question, Sir, why are we involving the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central on a commission of the hospital? Is this an extension of a scenario where we have people being established as commissioners, ambassadors and all types of positions for all kinds of strange reasons? Is this part of an extension of that and in a context where you have as the head of this commission a Member of this Parliament which therefore brings to bear serious questions that could arise out of a conflict of interest, first of all being a parliamentarian, secondly being a head of a political party, thirdly being ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I do not think we should go down that line. There is a Commission of Inquiry about to take place so therefore I do not think we should get into that at this stage. Could you please continue?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Chairman, I am ...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I draw to Your Honour's attention, Sir, that the Commission set up to investigate the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is an advisory commission and does not fall under the Commission of Inquiry Act and therefore there is nothing that precludes this House or any part thereof from examining any matter in great detail that the commission may or may not examine. I draw it to Your Honour's attention for what it is worth, Sir.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is misleading the House. It does falls under the Commission 01 Enquiry Act. It is an advisory commission but it still falls under the Act. It is not true to say it does not. The Act establishes two different types of committees.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. This is for the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. First of all there is a Commission of Inquiry. Could you desist from talking about a conflict of interest involving the Member for St. Michael East?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am saying I went to school and I think it would be an abuse of education in Barbados and it would be an abuse of this Chamber if I did not see a situation which clearly I am saying presents a situation which allows for a conflict of interest. It does not reflect on the Chairman. If it were me I would say the same thing. If it were the Member next to me I would say the same thing. I am saying that in principle, if you have a parliamentarian dealing with that issue it therefore presents a case of a conflict of interest. It is straightforward logic, Sir. This is first form thinking. I am not reflecting. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is an Honourable gentleman, I respect him but I have to deal with this issue on principle. I have no problem with the Member being chairman but I am saying that in his capacity as a Parliamentarian it presents a case of a conflict of interest.

A lot of this happens, Sir, but people pass it over as if it is nothing. I am saying that what he will discover himself is that if he were to make certain rulings on the part of certain decisions he would compromise himself. He might be doing it with all good intentions. I believe he has good intentions but I am saying by virtue of the fact of his position he places himself in a difficult position. 5.40 p.m.

And perhaps the other side knows better than he does The Other Side perhaps knows better than he does that he is being placed in a very difficult position. This is a point that I am making on principle. It has nothing to do with the personality of the man. I respect the gentleman, Sir, so we are not dealing with that.

I am therefore asking the question, Sir, if the problems are known, if the solutions are being taken care *of,* why do we have a commission. And I am saying, Sir, that when the Honourable Member stood up and made her speech, I asked myself what did I come in here to vote on these for. She knows everything, so it is just a matter of finding the money to do what has to be done. And all know, Sir, that most of the problems for the hospital stem from a lack of money. Most of the problems in the past stem from a lack of money. So if you are providing the money because you have better economic times, you have more money available, you are providing the hospital with more money, why do these problems still continue?

Sir, I am particularly concerned when people get into accidents and I go to the hospital and I see people there who are 70 and 80 years old having to wait in the Casualty for hours and hours - one night I went there about 8.00 p.m. there was an old lady there sitting in the chair until 12 o'clock. When they took her inside, she stayed there another two hours.

I do not care what you do with the hospital, once you can take care of these people who are in Casualty, you would have done your job and you would have gotten all the ticks in the world. You would have scored. You have a fancy name for it now. So all the fancy talk we are hearing and we can still go in there and find old men and women sitting in there in pain, the problem has not been solved. And the problems remain the same. And all the fancy talk we are getting in here and putting down, we are not addressing the problem and I am tired of just coming to Parliament and resorting to a lot of nasty remarks about one another and that kind of foolishness instead of dealing with the issues. And I am not here to talk about these remarks we are here to deal with social problems. That is what we are here for, not to fool around. I do not want to see those old and poor people in the Casualty groaning in pain for hours and hours on end. When you solve that problem, you would have scored and that is what I am interested in.

I do not think it takes any Commission to deal with the problem of the Casualty. Whatever you have to do get it done.

Mr. Chairman, I would like you to teach this Honourable Member some manners.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like to see Honourable Members behaving themselves in a better way. I have been very tolerant but I certainly would not be too tolerant in sending out anybody for misbehaving in this House.

Could you continue?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I am dealing with serious issues about poor ordinary people, groaning in the hospital for hours and the Honourable Member who is the Minister of Health is getting up and walking about and making nasty remarks about me and I must tolerate that? No, Sir, you have to deal with her.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East, could you please withdraw what you said just now about the Honourable Member.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I rise on a point of privilege because when the privileges of the House appear to be in danger, I feel that I have a duty to rise and state what the position is. When last I came into the House, the House was presided over by the Deputy Speaker. Your Honour is now in Committee presiding over the Committee.

In Committee, Sir, that Honourable Member who serves as our Deputy Speaker, rises on a point of order and raises a question, which leaves me to feel that when next the Honourable Member sits in the Chair, the Honourable Member's capacity will have been at the least diminished slightly. I am concerned that the Honourable Member may have had a lapse and therefore in the heat of the discussion rose on a point of order. But the Honourable Member should know that the Deputy Chair ought not to rise on a point of order to raise that kind of matter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken. Could you proceed the Honourable Member for Christ Church East?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that based on the speech given by the Honourable Member for St. James I cannot support this Resolution. She knows the problem, she knows the answers and I have been and I have included another one that she seems to have overlooked. The poor people sitting in the Casualty for eight hours groaning in pain. Let her deal with that. She had four years to deal with it. She has not dealt with it and I want her to deal with that and I would applaud her. I would stand up and say that she has done a good job. That is how I operate.

Aside.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I do not have to say 'Honourable Member' every single time.

Aside.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: It is not the practice. Look in Hansard. I do not have to say it.

Aside.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Sir, I am not voting for this Resolution unless the Honourable Member gives an assurance that she will be looking after the Casualty. She must give us an assurance that she is going to look after the Casualty.

Mr. Chairman, if I were in her place, I would have resigned ever since because that kind of person has no right in here in the first place. Because she does not know what she is doing. She has a problem at the Casualty, she has not addressed it, but instead of doing that she is going around rummaging around in any garbage she can find and bringing it in here. Let her put that garbage where it belongs.

I have not come in here to rummage around in garbage. I have come in here to deal with the issues of the people. I worked on a campaign which says that job number one is jobs. She worked on a campaign which says she is cleaning up the hospital and she has not done that. So if I had a Chairmanship, I could have been able to give jobs, not take away 400 jobs.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your time has expired. Thank you.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have been around long enough to know when the mood of the House is one in which there are expectations of events which will take place and when the serious season as it is called, electioneering takes place. 5.50p.m.

This is a simple Resolution and it is a Resolution to fund the Commission of Enquiry which has been appointed by the Governor General no doubt advised by the political directorate in office to enquire into the position at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and make recommendations thereon.

I remember, Sir, there have been a number of debates in this House, in fact, in this Session, and one of the subjects of the debate has been that despite considerable sums of money being placed at the disposal of those who are responsible for the management and operation of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital there is still a general perception outside by the public of Barbados that they are not getting an improved service.

When one looks at the facts one sees that the vote has in fact moved from $61 million in 1994-95 to $81 million now. That is a $20 million increase in provisions at the hospital. So, obviously, Sir, it cannot be a question of money because despite the fact that each year additional sums of money have been voted for the services there is still that perception, that general feeling, that there has not been an improvement.

Given those facts, I can well understand why it is necessary to have an in-depth examination of what has taken place. It is very clear to me that that examination cannot be the same kind of examination that has taken place in the past because I do not believe there has been an institution which has been subject to more consultancy examinations like the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. There have been large sums of money spent on consultancies, from PAHO to Boston to North Western, Inter-American Development Bank, the works, and still the situation has not improved.

Now I have a few questions myself as to why I am supportive of a Commission of Enquiry of a different kind because we have a 650 bed hospital and my understanding is that there are somewhere around 110 doctors. Now when I divide the number of doctors into the number of beds I find that the ratio is extraordinarily high. Now somebody must explain to me as a layman how come that you have all of these doctors and there is still supposed to be a shortage

of doctors in each and every specialty. I cannot understand it. That is why we mrst have a commission of enquiry.

The second point that we have is the Casualty.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I wish to draw to Your Honour's attention I like this debate. It is fine but we do not have a quorum, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: There is a quorum. Proceed!

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, that is the problem. I have been around long enough to know that there is a class of persons in Barbados who cannot afford to pay for private medical help, whether you have a vestry system or local government system.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: One of the problems mentioned by the Other Side, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East made the point that his experience is that one of the areas of greatest concern is the Casualty. That department I know has been the subject of intense examination. They even gave it a consultant. I think there is a consultant or two to the Accident and Emergency. In my opinion, Sir, some of the same problems that occurred previously still occur. That is, that Barbadians have a concept of what is an accident and emergency department which is slightly different from people in other countries. They go to the Accident and Emergency department when they should be going to other public sector institutions for treatment of the particular type of malady. In other words, Sir, the polyclinics that were created in Barbados were created to deal with what one would call the general practitioner clinics so as to relieve the Casualty of that and let the Casualty be a true emergency unit.

Sir, I have a lot of experience in this because the Barbados Labour Party in its desire to improve the health situation in Barbados which has always been one of its fundamental tenets tried to fashion out a comprehensive state medical insurance scheme or a scheme for the delivery paid for by levy and an essential part of that was the integration between the polyclinics and the hospital.

I, as a Minister of Finance and a Minister of Establishments sat with the Medical Association of Barbados and it was worked out that a comprehensive regrading of the specialists would take place and I remember the words very well - we will expect to have a greater load because of referrals from the polyclinics and we want to have the integration and as specialists we want more money.

Their posts were regraded and additional posts were granted to a number of specialists. I would like the Commission of Enquiry and I am very glad of its composition to be able to tell us why with all of that additional money is there still the problem of referrals and getting an opinion.

I know this and people have not seen the significance of what is happening in Barbados in this area because there is a rival private sector institution which has been set up in Belleville to the existing medical...

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: ... Wait a minute! I have no quarrel with that but it is very significant that a great number of the people who are consultants to the Hospital are also the same people who operate at that private centre. That is another reason why we should have a comprehensive look at this thing because we would like to know whether - the Honourable Member talks of conflict of interest - we would really like to know whether it is compatible for a private emergency medical casualty to be in existence and run by the same people who have a public service obligation. Obviously, it can only be done outside of the period of time. I believe it can only be done outside of the period of time. We have serious problems in relation to whether there is value for money. That is the point, we have serious problems as to whether there is value for money at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I am not going to deal with the other areas of maintenance. You only have to pass the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to see that it was not maintenance in a good manner. You only have to pass there and see it. 6.00 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: We all know that there is a fundamental problem with the question of people in Barbados, leaving their family as they get older, in the casualty; I went in there more than once and I have seen the people and I asked, who are they? They say, these are people that have been left by their families.

The Honourable Members, in their sober moments, when they reflect on this, they will see the rationale for the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry. They may not agree with the composition of the Commission of Enquiry but the point is that money is not the answer because $20 million was thrown at it. There are human problems, there are institutional problems, all of those things and that is what the Commission of Enquiry is for.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: They themselves say that money is not the answer because they have $80 million.

You have to deal with a lot of the human problems and there are institutional problems.

This is the last point I am going to make. It is no use telling me that a Board is the answer because I have lived through politics long enough to know that this Government has passed a Bill for the creation of a Board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital many many years ago and could not get it implemented because of human problems.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN: No, no, not in 1937. It was in 1964 and that is a fact. It is on the statute books.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Yes, Sir. With all these myriad problems all of us would like to see the best service available to Barbadians because we spend a lot of money. People outside marvel at the amount of money we spend and therefore I feel that an objective examination of what takes place at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is more than due and I welcome the opportunity, Sir, to participate in a debate on this matter. It is not any motivation of any spite by the Minister, any incompetence by the Minister or nothing. The Minister does not run the Casualty nor the Pathology Department nor the surgeries nor does she maintain the equipment.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The Minister cannot interfere with thftt Do not believe that.

Therefore, Sir, I welcome and I am supporting this Resolution.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I was not going to intervene in this debate because I have promised myself that I will let the Ministry of Health get on with its work without any intervention from me. The Honourable Member who has just sat down has raised a level of debate which I think requires some response and assistance. I think the Honourable Member has made a significant contribution and well he might because in his capacity as Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for Establishments, he was the last public authority who dealt with the whole question of the introduction of a National Health Service in Barbados and in pursuit of that, gave to the consultants in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, advertently or otherwise, a level of existence within the public sector of this country that is second to none.

I think I have to say that one of the problems of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has to do with attitudes. It has to do with the attitudes which are demonstrated by humans in this society in relation to the other hitmans who function in this society. I am satisfied that there is a large cadre of professional people in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who do their duty, who perform it to the best of their ability and who have demonstrated compassion for their fellowman. There is another set that has shown no interest whatsoever in moving the body politic forward. I do not think it is any secret that if one is going to be responsible for the public administration of this country that one has sometimes to bite the bullet.

The problem with the Barbados Labour Party administration is that as it came to office in 1994, perhaps because of the lack of experience of those whose responsibility it was to continue the role of administering the health services of this country, perhaps because of the lack of experience they spent so much time working on reducing the contribution which had been made by those who had gone before them that they lost track of what the objective of health care in this country should be.

I have always maintained and I will continue to maintain to my dying day that health care in this country ought not to be divided along partisan lines. There is no Democratic Labour Party way or Barbados Labour Party way to run the hospital. There is no Democratic Labour Party way or Barbados Labour Party way to pick up garbage. There is a way that is the right way for the people of Barbados and irrespective of who is the group that is responsible for administering this country, there are certain givens which we should take as sacred and let them flow.

Unfortunately, in this country, we have seen an attempt on the part of an administration, instead of moving forward with the flow, to go back and to find out how they could somehow put a veil over the administration that had gone before.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is not an easy institution to administer. What has to be recognised about it and what the Commission must discover and will discover is that first and foremost, it is the largest hotel institution in Barbados. It has to cater to more heads of people in one institution than any other institution in this country. It has to provide meals for a larger number of people than any hotel in Barbados. You first must get the hotel aspects of the hospital right. You must get the environment within which the hospital must prosper, right. It is impossible to have a good hospital if the environment in the hospital is not right. Both at the level of the humans who participate and the physical conditions where people have to operate, both those who work there and those who go there as patients or clients.

I spent a substantial part of my life trying to see if I could get those in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to concentrate on the patients and recognise that it must become a patient oriented institution. That first and foremost the only reason for the existence of the hospital is not to provide jobs for people in the hospital, not to provide patients for the doctors to work on but that the only reason for the existence of the hospital, is the patients themselves.

Unless that is understood by all who have responsibility for running that institution, then we could never get the hospital to move out of its position which it has moved into from time to time, one that is not acceptable to a civilised society.

Mr. Chairman, it caters to more than 1 500 people employed in that institution. There are more than 1 500 employed in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. They run the entire gamut, the entire spectrum of the social system of Barbados. They have maids, cleaners and consultants, many of whom are just one stage below God. So they run the entire gamut of the social strata of Barbados and it is very important therefore that those who administer the hospital be able to deal with those at the highest level and those at the lowest level. 6.10p.m.

My major concern and complaint with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as it exists today is that ordinary people are not regarded in that institution or rather by the administration of the country, ordinary people are not regarded by the administration of this country, as worthy of serious trouble.

I am going to explain what I mean, Sir. Ordinary people who go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital today run a risk of fear. They have fear of going to the hospital. They have fear of being ignored. They run the fear of not having anybody concerned for them. The system which operates today is not at the level which allows a patient who is not a paying patient to feel comfortable in mind about what kind of service he or she is going to get in the hospital. I say that without fear of contradiction and I do not care what anybody says about that. That is my conviction that ordinary people who are going to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital today run the risk of being ignored. I can speak with authority on that subject. I have personal experience in that.

Neglect and negligence in the hospital is higher today than it has ever been. There are ordinary people who go into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who are in fear of dying because of negligence and neglect. There are people who go to the hospital who are sent back home, who come back to the hospital the next day for them to discover that the person had a life threatening illness and they actually die. If I am called upon 1 can give at least 5 examples of persons who were sent back home by that institution in 1998 to go back home and then come back and go back and die. They go into that hospital and die because they are misdiagnosed, because they are ill-treated, because nobody cares about them. Ordinary people in this society today have no reason to have faith in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I never thought I would live to make that statement, Sir, but it is a fact of life demonstrated by the record and I hope no one challenges me to produce that record.

I have been a personal victim of it, Sir, so I speak with authority. We have consultants in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who are not doing their job. I want to repeat there are consultants in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who are not doing their job. They are not acting responsibly in this country. There are consultants in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who are drawing money on false pretenses. I say so. Put it in the record. Put it in the newspaper and let them challenge me. There are people in this country who do not wish to talk about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because they fear that one day they are going to get ill and they have to go there and if they say what they have to say they will get killed.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It means that it was going on when you were the Government, when you were in the Opposition, and now you are in the Government again. 1 know what 1 am talking about.

The Honourable Member talks about there were 8 cases of litigation. Only 8? The citizens of this country need to become aware of their rights and the lawyers who practice in this country need to understand that it is their right to call for the records of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to go into court and ask for them. This business of losing records, they had better stop before somebody is charged with manslaughter. They had better stop losing records in this country before somebody is charged with manslaughter. Every time there is a case to come up in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where the negligence of some practitioner is to be examined they feel that the records are to get lost. Well I have news for them. 1 will declare war on them. My brother was killed in. the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This very year 1998.1 said he was killed. The lawyers understand what I mean. Negligence is a form of killing. I do not have any apology to make to anybody. If you go into the hospital in the condition he was in and you do not have the benefit of a consultant in a hospital where a consultant is paid, that is negligence of the highest order. That is not the first time he has been the victim of negligence.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has 2 more minutes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am sorry, Sir, I do not have 2 more hours. But the time will come when I will speak in this House about that hospital because I have spent a lot of my time trying to help make it better. I begged them on that Side to do not let us make the hospital a political issue. It is my conviction that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital should not be a political issue. It has been made a political issue but I am saying that in due course the details of what has happened or what has not happened will have to come out. So even with the conflict of interest 1 await with bated breath the results of the Commission of Inquiry.

I wish to hear from the Commissioners and the commissioners are eminent men and women who have knowledge of what has gone on and what has not gone on in this country in hospital affairs. We in this House of Assembly have a duty and I have a particular duty, Mr. Chairman, to go in and dig underneath and pull up and expose. That is my duty and my responsibility and the time will come, inside and outside of this House, when the truth will have to come out. It is no point anybody saying to me to take it easy because there is nothing to take it easy about and there are some people in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who seem to feel that they are above and beyond reproof.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time has expired.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, there is a Commission of Inquiry that is under way at the moment and it is improper for the Honourable Member to be referring to certain matters before the Commission at this time and he knows that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I know no such thing, Sir. Before the Honourable Member came in here, Sir, I pointed out that it is an advisory commission and an advisory commission is nothing more than a fact finding commission and we are under no obligation whatsoever under any part of the law in Barbados not to speak as we Members of Parliament see.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time has expired now.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am surprised that an Honourable Member who is a trained lawyer would come in here and make such a foolish recommendation to this Committee.
6.20 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I welcome the opportunity to join in this debate and to say that I suspect this is going to be the first in many of the debates that we will be joining in on matters pertaining to health, Sir. I have been taking note of the sanctimonious attitude of those persons who more than any other person in Barbados are responsible for the very sad state of the affairs at the QEH.

But before I say anything, Sir, I really want to put on the records of this Parliament that my gratitude and the gratitude of this entire administration for the tremendous job that the Minister of Health has had to do, faced, Mr. Chairman, with one the most distressing situations in the whole history of public administration in this country.

This Minister of Health, Mr. Chairman, did not invent the problems at the QEH. She did not come to find a QEH, Sir, where all was well and in a wonderful state of health, Sir. She came and found a QEH that was the victim of at least a decade of maladministration. A decade, Mr. Chairman, of being starved of resources to carry out functions. A decade, Mr. Chairman, of political interference in relation to appointments, political direction of all of the affairs of the Hospital, Sir. She came and found a hospital administration that had been driven to a situation of anarchy, by the attitude of those, who would now want in this debate to be most sanctimonious. And she has been struggling against great odds to put more than a decade of wrongs right.

Sir, she is not responsible for the fact that the subvention to the QEH was cut so that resources could have been diverted to the St. Joseph Hospital. She could not be held responsible for the fact that every system in the hospital was so allowed to deteriorate that simple, technical functions vital to the running of the Hospital could not have been carried out.

She, Mr. Chairman, Sir, was not responsible for the fact that there were people drawing money at the Hospital who were not on payroll, nor did they have contracts with the Hospital. And I will repeat that, Sir. For more than a decade there were people drawing taxpayer's funds at the QEH who were not on payroll and did not have contracts. The Minister of Health was not responsible for those things. That is what she inherited. And that is the mess which was allowed to accumulate over ten years, responsible for the sad mistake at the QEH in the mid 1990s.

I am amused when I hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael East find a voice about the management of solid waste facilities. Where was he when the Democratic Labour Party was allowing the biggest mountain of garbage in the history of the western hemisphere? I say, Mr. Chairman, that in this matter of the QEH, Sir, the Democratic Labour Party speak of a position of utter hypocrisy and they are totally discredited by experience. It is not as if the QEH was being run well, provided with resources and allowed to evolve functions in a modern way.

The QEH was deliberately run into the ground because in the context of shrinking resources, ambitions were allowed to intrude that starved the QEH of the resources that should have been in there, in order to satisfy and support people's vanity in the North of Barbados. That is the record. A decade of institutional decay. And, in every instance, the second law of thermodynamics that all physical systems left to themselves would tend towards a state of atrophy.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West may come in here with a sanctimonious attitude but the public servants talked about how every appointment at the QEH had to go to him.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Right Honourable Prime Minister is misleading this Committee. The Right Honourable Prime Minister is giving hearsay about what public servants say to him. But I am not going to be decoyed by the Right Honourable Prime Minister. The Right Honourable Prime Minister is misleading this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your point has been taken. Can you proceed?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I also charge in this debate, Sir, what has been said that a lot of appointments of a purely political nature that had nothing, whatsoever with serious management...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The first time that there was political interference in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is when the Honourable Members over there chased away three members for political reasons. Let them talk about why he destroyed three people in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for purely political reasons. Let the Right Honourable Prime Minister say that.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your point has been taken. Could you proceed, the Right Honourable Prime Minister?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I was not even allowed to finish my statement and I did not refer to who were the political appointments. But the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has just gotten up and entered on the Floor of the House the view that there was the perception that people were politically appointed and hence had to be politically disappointed.

Sir, his sense of guilt is coming through.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, I have no sense of guilt. I have a sense of shame.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, on what point of order did you rise?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. He said that I have a sense of guilt. I have no sense of guilt, Sir.

Asides

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please proceed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the sanctimony of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is very touching to me. I love the way how he comes to the House, Sir, and he is so pious and as the Minister of the QEH he is about politics and he was not involved in influencing any decisions of appointments.

Asides.

6.30 p.m.

The only Honourable Member in this House who can speak to that matter of the University with veracity would be the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member is the only person I know who has ever recruited anybody.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, do you know why I can speak with such force in this case that we were not aware of it but Members on his Side kept coming to the Public Accounts Committee asking why don't you inquire into these scenes?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. I was a member of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament and I can confirm today that that conspiracy between the present Prime Minister and the present Attorney General about the hospital was an orchestrated plot to cut off the head of Branford. I found nothing that would in any way dishonour or discredit the Honourable Member.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken. Member for St. Michael East, can you take your seat?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I took my role as a member of the Public Accounts Committee very seriously and I attended to allow that committee to meet.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken.

Rt Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: There is a passage in the Bible, Sir, that says the evil flee where no one pursues him. There are other members of the Democratic Labour Party who were on the Public Accounts Committee but it is a fact that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East lias this quite distressing attitude. He comes and he would want to "buse" here, Sir, and then he goes to another corner and he wants to curry favours with them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, could you please stick to the subject.

Mr. J. O. TUD°R: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member made comments that I need to respond to. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. There is a verbatim report available in this House which in no way points to the fact that I said one thing here or one thing there against any of my colleagues. The Honourable Member is deliberately misleading the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, it is a matter of public record that those of us who served on that Public Accounts Committee when we went on the Committee, we were not aware of any issues pertaining to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West recruiting people abroad but that issue

of recruiting for hospitals was put before us by members of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. There is nothing in any report from the Public Accounts Committee that deals with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. There is nothing in the report and therefore the Honourable Member cannot say that anybody put anything about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital before him at the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point is taken. Could you proceed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the St. Joseph Hospital was relevant because the resources that could have gone to the Queen Elizabeth...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have stated both as a Minister and subsequently in this House that I categorically confirm that no monies for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital were ever diverted to any other institution in this country. It is improper, incorrect and wrong if not down-right wicked for anyone to suggest that monies were diverted from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am saying that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital vote was cut and its subvention was reduced and the Hospital was not able therefore to maintain existing services to maintain its plant and to carry out expanded functions in the context of reduced subventions. That is a matter of public record and we are now...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Right Honourable Member is misleading this Committee. The Right Honourable Member is Minister of Finance and must know that the only extent to which there is a reduction in the numbers in the Estimates had to do with the fact that the Inter-American Development Bank's project which was administered by PAHO'had come to an end and all the massive improvements at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital had been completed and therefore the budgetary system which we use required that the amounts be reduced. In real terms the Right Honourable Member is the first to admit when he is not on his feet that the amounts had been increased steadily throughout the period from 1990 to 1998.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, if the Honourable Member for St. Michael West was to get on the Floor of the House and say that it is a fact that the Hospital was starved of funds it was not his fault; but it was starved of funds. It was starved of funds to the point where under a Democratic Labour Party administration a study had been carried out to do what the Haynes' study is intending now to do. If you wanted conclusive evidence, Mr. Chairman, that we are talking in terms not of a problem of recent vintage but a problem of a deep-seated nature that has as much to do with institution deficiencies, structural problems and a lack of resources, that evidence is to be found in the fact that this is not the first commission or the first serious enquiry into the circumstances of the hospital intended to provide prescriptions for changes in its functioning. That is a fact, Sir.

If this was the first time in recent years that such a commission had to be called into existence then one could say perhaps it is of recent vintage but the reality as the Honourable Member for St. Michael West knows and perhaps I should stop blaming him and blame those who dispense resources that the Hospital really was sadly systematically starved of funds. The reality also is that there has been a lot of management at the Hospital and at a technical level that has left a lot to be desired.

Sir, how can anybody justify a system of medical management where people can order an elevator and the parts of it are scattered out without regard to the public's well-being? How do you justify and rationalise that structure of management?

Sir, I must tell you that we have had ourselves to face a situation at the Hospital that is not one that we enjoy. Nobody relishes the fact that the Hospital is in the public domain as a controversial issue. Indeed, it has always been to Barbados' credit that in the area of health care management, in the years immediately following independence we developed a reputation of being a country where our management capabilities in the health care sector were strong and sound. 6.40 p.m.

Sir, I am saying as well that if the Honourable Member for St. Michael West would come off his partisan high horse, he would admit Sir, I am speaking not to be politically divisive, that he himself was not happy with management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital neither and that if he had his way the nature of the management of the hospital would have been different from the one that he had to work with.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That is a fact. To the extent that he himself was unsettled by the nature of the management with which he had to work and to the extent that he himself knows that that management had departed from the very top standards to which we have become accustomed, he himself should be in a position to say to all of Barbados that the problem of management is not an invention of this Minister, it is a problem that has been there.

Sir, there are things that I do not think that I should speak to because I have to protect the probity and the

standing of all the public officers of Barbados, and I am not going to go into these things, Sir.

There is a sense in which, we who are policymakers, have in the final analysis, to shoulder the final responsibility for what happens to institutions under our care.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I cannot say that we must walk away from the nature of the problems at the hospital because they have now also persisted under us. I am not going to say that there is no problem of management at the hospital. I cannot say that. I cannot say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that there is every respect in which we are happy with the nature of the services there. I cannot say that. How could I say that, Sir? I cannot, however, having said that, say that it is the fault of the Minister because that cannot be true because she did not invent the problems which she now has.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Could you wind up, please?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, this Commission and I want to say this very carefully, Sir. This Commission is in fact the third Commission in the course of the last ten years that have had a go at studying the nature of the problems at the hospital and I want to commend my Minister of Health for her knowledge and vision in making it possible.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: 1 rise, Sir, to speak in this debate and to lend my very very strong support to the Honourable Minister of Health.

Sir, this Government has reached a stage where we are recognising that the difficulties being faced by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are not peculiar in their own right but we have had for a number of years as the last speaker, the Right Honourable Prime Minister indicated, to deal with management problems that had become endemic. That we have to recognise also that the health care systems the world over and in particular in the region, Mr. Chairman, and I speak from the very specific knowledge of sitting as a member of the University of the West Indies Council and therefore having reports come to me on a regular basis in respect to the University Hospital of the West Indies, which one would venture and I make bold to say, face difficulties even more acute than that faced by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital here in Barbados.

Recognising all of these factors, Mr. Chairman, it was a mature decision in my view for the Honourable Minister of Health to request at this stage a detached and independent view of what would be required, Mr. Chairman, to deal with the issues in respect of putting, before we go into the 21st century, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on a firm and proper footing. Looking at the systems, looking at the need for policy changes, looking at the need for resources and bearing in mind, Sir, that pending the receipt of that report, the considerable work which has already been done by the Ministry of Health and the Minister of Health in ensuring that they could mitigate any inconvenience caused to the public of Barbados.

What is significant, Sir, is that this Minister of Health came into a health system where the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and other areas within our Ministry had first to clear a whole host of arrears before she could even start to deal with the proper provisioning for what was in existence there.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member has been in here for four years. The Honourable Member knows that at the end of each financial year all debts are off and the new year starts. The Honourable Member cannot start talking about provisioning. The provisioning which would have to be done would have nothing to do with the management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Honourable Member knows that. We in this House pass the Estimates every year.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, with respect, the Honourable Member was a Minister and I am a Minister and we both know that the Ministry of Finance will place ceilings on the amounts to be allowed to each respective line Ministry. If a line Ministry has a legal liability to clear, that legal liability must be cleared first before you can bring in any new files to deal with any new policy initiatives or anything else.

Mr. .B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member surely is misleading the House. The Financial Administration and Audit Act, the rules by which they operate are clear. The Honourable Member cannot introduce new and different information in regard to how a Ministry functions in terms of payments. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that when you get Estimates for a given year that the Estimates include payments of bills for the previous year and that when sums are given, those bills must come out first.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, with respect, the Honourable Member knows fully well and his claim to have been in here longer is no excuse or no substitute for good judgement and good knowledge. The Honourable Member knows that where Government has a statutory liability, a legal liability, that that has to be cleared. If, therefore, one does not take into account the amount owed in respect of legal liabilities, you will always burst the ceiling allocated to you by the Ministry of Finance. That is, in fact, what continued to happen, year after year, Mr. Chairman, in

respect of the Ministry of Health under the last administration. One of the things, that this Government determined earlier on and indeed the Right Honourable Prime Minister referred to it in his Budget during the year of 1996, that this Government in the financial year of 1995 to 1996 brought to book over $15 million in arrears from the Ministry of Health for equipment that was there and supplies that had not been paid for.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member must know that if equipment is ordered in one year and delivered in the next year...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order, could you please take your seat.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, it was not a case of equipment being ordered and coming in late. This was a case of bills there lying down for long periods of time. This was'a case of replenishment, Sir, of the Medical Aid Scheme for commitments that were made for people way in excess of what the Medical Aid Scheme had to offer. This was a case, Mr. Chairman, of the angiographic suite which was brought in. All of that was functioning when we came into Government. 6.50p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Ministry of Finance allowed the angiographic suite to be financed through a system and the Minister of Finance in that year said that he was going to repudiate the decision made by the Ministry of Finance and that he was going to bring the cost of the angiographic suite to book in that year. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the current cost of running the Ministry of Health. The angiographic suite was paid for by the Crown Agents through General Electric. It was agreed by the Ministry of Finance that the moneys would be paid for over time and the Minister of Finance in 1995 said that he was not going to pay for the angiographic suite, that it would be paid for in 1995.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am amazed, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that after 20 years in public life in this Honourable Chamber that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has such a fleeting understanding of the Financial Administration and Audit Rules because if he had a sufficient understanding of that, Sir, he would have known that any gift to the Government of Barbados has still to be reflected in the Estimates of Expenditure.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. There was no gift. The angiographic suite was bought by the Government of Barbados. It was bought by General Electric. It was bought through the Crown Agents because it was bought during a time when there was structural adjustment and the Crown Agents paid for it and it was agreed that it would be paid for over time. It was not a gift and the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the present administration, in his presentation in 1995 said that he did not....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken. Could you proceed?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I still rest on what I have said because the Honourable Member would wish to come in here and cause people to believe that because he has 20 years of parliamentary experience everything he says is gospel. The fact still remains that this Government in 1995-96 was forced to clear almost $15 million in arrears before we could deal with policy priorities of this administration.

Sir, what is even more is that much of this expenditure was directed to those big fancy things while neglecting the very basic needs of people in this country. Sir, it is a fact of record that when we came into office in this country in 1994 that persons were on waiting lists for minor surgery in excess of one year and 18 months. It is a fact, Sir, that basic things such as the elevators in the hospital continued not to work.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I wish the Honourable Member to show us an elevator in the hospital that is working today, 4 years later. Four years later the elevator is still not working. The Honourable Member is misleading this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken. Could you proceed?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, not only is the Honourable Member not familiar with the Financial Administration and Audit Rules, he clearly does not go into the hospital any more and I could appreciate that. The reality is, Sir, that up until last week, because my grandmother has been going in there every two, three weeks with heart failure and 7 out of the 8 hospital elevators are now working. The reality also is, Mr. Chairman, that they have been purchased at a cost of $260 000 per lift.

It is also a fact, Sir, that the reason why it has taken so long to fit the elevators in the hospital is because of the fact that they have to be specifically built for the hospital. They cannot go and pick them up and buy them and then put them in. They have to be specifically built for the purposes of the hospital.

My point simply is this, Sir, that we, Sir, were in a position where we were left with a legacy where all of the major fancy things that sounded good like the Eye Care Annex, the Angiographic Suite, all of those things, Sir, which I have no objection to under normal circumstances, Mr. Chairman...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. The Lions Eye Care Centre at the hospital up to today has been left unopened. Over $7 million this Government has allowed to leave lying ...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point of order has been taken.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is that after 4 years, even if the first year was spent tidying up roll over debts the point is the Minister has had 4 years since then on their own policy and on their own additional financing and the hospital is in a worse shape than it ever was.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, all that is said does not take away from the fact that it took millions of dollars to build the Lions Eye Care Annex. It also took, Mr. Chairman, millions of dollars to go into other things and now, Mr. Chairman the point is simply this. Nobody is saying that those things would not be desirable but they would only be desirable in a situation where we have covered all of the basic needs of the hospital, where we can provide adequate services for the very basic needs of people and Mr. Chairman, all of this was compounded by decisions taken during the Democratic Labour Party administration to put pressure on the hospital.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Minister is misleading the House. The Minister knows that the Ministry at present cannot even provide forks and talking about providing the basic needs? Today you cannot even provide forks. The language you are using does not scare anybody.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Michael East that is no point of order.

Hon. Miss M, A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I do not know what happens to the forks whenever the Honourable Member for St. Michael East goes into the hospital but certainly when I was in there last week with my grandmother she was using a fork. Now that does not mean that the hospital does not have all the things that they need or has all the things that they need. I am simply saying to you, Mr. Chairman, that increased pressure continues to be placed on the vote of the hospital by reason of other policy decisions taken by the Democratic Labour Party administration and we are now in a position of trying to recoup from it, the diverted expenditure to St. Joseph, the curtailing of the hours at the polyclinic system which put additional pressure on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to service people whether it is in Accident and Emergency or otherwise, Sir. 7.00 p.m.

In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Democratic Labour Party continued to take decisions by reasons, or because of their economic mismanagement of the economy, that would lead to a further $10 million cut, which in respect represented almost a 20% cut on expenditure that would have normally been available to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

And I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, they were also presiding as well at the CARICOM Ministers of Health Conference when they changed the length of internship from 12 months to 18 months putting additional pressure on the hospital.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. Whereas I could allow the Honourable Member to make her political point, to say that we presided at a Caribbean Health Conference...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Even if you said we were there, Sir, decisions are not made by the Health Ministers/?er *se*, these are decisions ratified by the Health Ministers because the system requires it. But the Honourable Member knows that health ministers have no jurisdiction on the length of time of internship and I really think it is a travesty to introduce that. It is not only a red herring, Sir, it is a dead whale.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken. Could you proceed please?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The only dead whale I know about, Sir, is the one either in St. Philip on the coast, or one that may be found in George Street.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The point I am making, Sir, in a very serious way, is that the decision to lengthen the period of internship taken by the CARICOM Ministers of Health from 12 months to 18 months has placed undue pressure on the hospital in terms of:

1. Its capacity to service the number of interns.

2. In respect of the fact that you now have to find more money because the interns are there for a longer period of time.

And, I am saying to you, Sir, that it is the belief of this Government that that decision to carry internship to 18 months has in all good conscience to be reviewed. Not necessarily in terms of its curtailment back to 12 months but in a restructuring of the internship that would allow persons to either be stationed for longer periods at the Psychiatric Hospital, at the Polyclinic or other such health institutions to allow for a better spread of training in respect of health care.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You know, Sir, when Honourable Members go outside you never can tell what might happen to them and he might be a little mixed up.

But, Sir, we cannot allow the last comment made by the Honourable Member who just sat down to go unresponded to because it would send forward a whole set of confusions. The whole question about the training of doctors in the Caribbean is not a matter that is determined by the Health Ministers and I understand the need to get in some political points. But I wish that the Minister responsible for Education, and this is an education matter, Sir, it is a matter that is determined first by the Ministers of Education.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. The Ministers of Education would have had no such decision and exercised no such decision as to the length of internship for doctors in the Caribbean. The University of the West Indies may have done so in their own rights, but it would have then gone to the Ministers of Health. It does not come to the Ministers of Education and I say so categorically, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member knows she has responsibility for the University of the West Indies in her portfolio and that the curriculum of the University of the West Indies falls within the ambit of the Ministers of Education. But I will not resile from the fact that the decision to change the curriculum and the methodology of the training of doctors may have come to a Health Ministers Conference of which I might have attended as Minister of Health.

I would not resile from that, Sir, because we have always accepted our responsibility. The fact is that in the Caribbean there has been a reform of the methodology by which doctors are trained. The method that would be introduced in Trinidad at the Eric Williams Complex was to move away from the didactic method of teaching. It was a move to introduce the arrangement that had been sanctified in Scotland that education for doctors would take a different tack because of the new and different kinds of diseases and problems which would arise in medicine. And the University of the West Indies in tandem with other institutions around the world made a decision. And one of the decisions of the technical agencies responsible for medical education in the Caribbean was that instead of an internship of only 12 months that there would be a rotation that would include additional disciplines. And such disciplines that had not been included in the round of training doctors were included and that is why the cycle was moved to 18 months rather than 12 months.

Now, as I said when the Honourable Member was not in her chair earlier today, it is the responsibility of the Government and not the University and I do not know how the University could manage to utter itself that they will be seeking to place persons.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. The payment of interns may be a responsibility of the Hospital. And insofar as the hospital is a government hospital, to that extent the Government accepts responsibility. But it must be the responsibility of the University who is issuing the degree and for whom the children cannot receive a degree unless they complete a period of internship that it must be the University's responsibility to provide the internship.

All that simply happens, Mr. Chairman, is that the University makes an arrangement with the Hospitals, knowing full well that the Hospitals need the supply of the labour and at the same time, they need the environment within which they can train their people. As is the case with the University Hospital of the West Indies at Mona.

But to suggest that it is the responsibility of the Government of Barbados to provide places for interns is a totally and completely misleading of this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member may not even understand the point I am making, so let me make it in simple terms. Any Government of Barbados or indeed of any country ought to have as part of its moral responsibility, to say nothing of its administrative understanding, that anyone in this country who is capable of learning to be a doctor ought to be given the opportunity to become a doctor.

As we turn into the twenty first century, Sir, the need for medically trained persons in this country is going to be so high that no Government in the absence of a proper...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber as to the policy of this Government. This Government's policy continues to be that as many people that we can train who can receive a degree for which they started at the end of the day and it can be completed thai we will train as many of them and that includes doctors. And that is why we have asked the University of the West Indies to bring on as a matter of urgency, other teaching hospitals so that we can train as many Barbadians who want to be doctors, as possible. And, in addition for the Minister of

Health to review that decision taken when it was lengthened to 18 months so that persons can do internships at other medical institutions to free up the pressure on the general hospital which is only 650 beds.

But it is the intention of this Government and it is the policy of this Government that so long as the persons can be guaranteed that they can finish a degree for which they started, then we must pay for them.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in Cuba which has arguably the best ratio of doctor-to-patient in the world, but certainly in this hemisphere, they have had no difficulty finding methodologies for teaching and training their medical personnel. And I am saying that it is a moral obligation on the part of any Government to ensure that there are sufficient systems in place to allow any person who wishes to be and who is capable of becoming, to become a doctor. And any attempt at reducing the training period such as to reduce it from 18 months to 12 months in order to satisfy any particular requirement of Government can be nothing short of a travesty. 7.10p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber again. The position of this Government is not that the period of time be shortened from 18 months to 12 months but that there be periods of time at other medical institutions such as the polyclinics, the geriatric hospitals and the psychiatric hospital. So that interns will now have the opportunity to be exposed to as broad a range of medicine as is possible, particularly given the aging population that this country is facing and particularly given the needs of community health care so that we can reduce some of the pressure that they continue to place on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital by curtailing the hours of the polyclinic.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Such language falls very lamely from the mouth of a government that shut down the only other hospital in this country. That was done without more. Only the most moronic government would have shut down a hospital and then we hear them saying they are looking for an institution at which people could be trained.

The Minister of Health can look in the records and find that among the programmes for the St. Joseph Hospital was to allow the university to have access to an expanding training programme but that is another matter, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber again. The issue of access to health care in teaching hospitals was brought to the fore by the Principal of Cave Hill and indeed, by the acting Dean at the time with the Minister of Health and myself. They said that the only hospitals that were considered in the last few years to remain as teaching hospitals by the University were Dominica and St. Lucia. Not in Barbados. So do not let us fool people that St. Joseph which could not even cure a burst toe according to the Minister of Health could now become a teaching hospital.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It could not cure a burst toe but it could replace a hip. The Minister of Health should tell you all about the hip that it replaced. I hope we get to that one of these days too. The Minister should have the integrity to tell the Cabinet that at that same St. Joseph Hospital there was at least one hip that she knows about that was replaced. There were many hips and knees replaced at the St. Joseph Hospital but that is another matter.

I do not wish to discuss that, Sir. I wish to go back to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where the nosocomial infection rate is higher than is acceptable in hospitals of repute in the western hemisphere. It is a matter which is going to become increasingly important where people leave home and go into the hospital with one complaint and before they can get out of the hospital they become ill with another complaint resulting from the crossing of diseases and infections.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is true of every hospital and we should try to get the rate down. That is what we were trying to do and what the Government should pay attention to instead of the frivolous reasons which have been advanced from time to time. But, Mr. Chairman, better must come as we know it.

Mr. Chairman, in the course of this discussion we have had all kinds of statements made about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In 1994, when we demitted office the Queen Elizabeth Hospital had been the beneficiary of a project which has been regurgitated time and time again in this hospital. A project which had its genesis according to the Deputy Prime Minister, during the time they were the Government the last time, a project at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which saw a substantial amount of money being spent to refurbish the entire hospital to build at least five new departments to deal for example with the question of premature babies and their survival.

Barbados has the best record of any country of its size or indeed anywhere in its dealing with premature babies. If we had not put in the new prem unit we would not have been able to boast of that. Many of those babies would have gone.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East amazed me when she talked about policies which brought in - I don't remember the words she used, something like high falutin concepts. Is she saying that open heart surgery which has saved the lives of more than 100 people in this country were big projects that ought not to have been there? Because the only reason for the angiographic suite was to allow

Barbados to be in a position to have open heart surgery and surely more than 120 persons have been the beneficiaries of open heart surgery.

Surely she could not have meant that open heart surgery was not something we ought not to have in Barbados.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the point I made and I stand by it was that in the context where you were causing people not to be serviced for minor operations you could not be moving to such capital intensive and personnel intensive policies such as the same angiographic suite until you had settled those basics. Once you settled those basics it would be highly desirable to move to that stage.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the argument of the Honourable Member is at the most sterile because the Honourable Member herself would know that the hospital had reached the level of providing basic care back in 1963 when it was opened.

We spent and built a new Accident and Emergency Department. We built a new angiographic suite but to the Honourable Member including in her tirade the eye care centre, the Lions' Eye Care Centre cost this Government not a cent but it was spite that the Honourable Members have not opened the Eye Care Centre.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, Sir. The Eye Care Centre has not been opened not because of spite but because there is a consultant's report which says that we would have had to have an active blinding programme to facilitate the size of the facility that has been built. It was built in excess of capacity and I might wish to add for the benefit of the House in order that the House may not be misled that the reality is that no resources were ever provided for that facility.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No resources were required because the current existing system of eye care treatment was not going to be abandoned. It was a continuation. We were providing the opportunity for the University of the West Indies to train ophthalmologists. It is one of the few specialities in medicine which one cannot be trained in, in the Caribbean. It was not designed for merely the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It was designed so that the University of the West Indies in the same way that it trains Obs/Gyns, surgeons and other specialities. It would have put us in a position to train people throughout the Caribbean, to be able learn to be ophthalmologists instead of the fact that people who want to be ophthalmologists still have to go to Scotland or Australia or New York and that people in this country have gone blind. There were people whose blindness was preventable who have gone blind because that unit has not been opened. There are at least five people in this country who have gone blind who would probably have had their sight.
7.20 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is not for me to come in here and call out names of people. It is for the Minister to do. And as for the medical aid scheme, there was a time when anybody who had an illness which could not be treated in Barbados was assured that they could get aid from the Medical Aid Scheme. Now, it is blind man buff, it is a question.....

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, that is patently untrue. I have been in this House during the years when we were in Opposition and every single year they came back here to supplement the Medical Aid Scheme. There was even a year, Mr. Chairman,when they did bring it to supplement it and people went without the facility.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is absolutely right. She said when she was in Opposition and that is true because the Government of the day understood that when it came to illness, we were not to....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member your time has expired.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There are people who have been dying in the country who did not get medical aid because this Government was practising the politics of spite.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I am going to have to ask that those comments be expunged from the records. The Honourable Member has said that on the basis of spite people are being denied access to the scheme and that people have to be my friend to get it. Mr. Chairman, every year since we have come to Government we have increased the vote to the Medical Aid Scheme and increased the number of persons who have had access to the fund. As long as the application comes through the correct process at the hospital, then they are given funding for their treatment once the recommendation is made by the appropriate doctors. It is totally untrue. As a matter of fact, Sir, prior to our coming to office the scheme was $ 1.4 million and has been moved from $ 1.4 million to $2 million. It is not a fact that people are being denied or that any consideration other than the medical recommendation is being made. Not another consideration.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point is made.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, on my honour, there are people in my constituency and beyond...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot make a point of order on another point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I said on my honour.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I told you that your time had expired.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, whatever is done to me tonight is fine. I have no problem. Whatever you do to me is fine but I am saying that on my honour....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has made a ruling, could you please take your seat.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, if that is what you say and if that is how you are going to function. I have had enough of that. I am not staying in here for you to treat me like that. Not me. I am too old for that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. George South, please proceed.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I am amazed as I listened to this debate when I heard Honourable Members on the Other Side made a lot of assertions. I had the honour during the last administration to shadow the Ministry of Health for one year and in March of 1994, Sir, I spoke on the question of health during the Annual Estimates. Many of the problems that I identified at the time and which were accepted by the then Minister of Health are being used by the Honourable Members on that Side today. I do not have much time because I hear that the debate is going to finish in eight minutes, so I will be quick about it.

The Medical Aid Scheme is the last thing that has been mentioned. I remember saying at that time that the then Government was operating the scheme on the basis of kisses going by favour. I said then, quite categorically, I had the specific cases then and I have them now, where the Government converted loans under the Medical Aid Scheme, loans that were made to friends of the then Government and who were in a position to repay the money, Government converted those loans to grants.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West who is very exuberant in these things, on that occasion got up and challenged me on the issue and then when the Minister of Health accepted that what I said was true, he sat down very quietly and said nothing more about it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I just wish to say that the Honourable Member is making a point which suggest that I raised the question. I wish to say that during the time I was Minister of Health that persons from all walks of life were given the opportunity to use the Medical Aid Scheme and there were no kisses or favour. I am aware of all those persons who come from a different stratum of society and I can justify any of them including persons related to, connected to, or recommended by Honourable Members.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I reiterate the point because the Honourable Member can use those tactics with other people, those who are green but he has not answered the point that I have made. To get up and say that everybody got is not the issue. The point is that under the last Democratic Labour Party regime the Medical Aid Scheme was providing massive grants to friends of the Democratic Labour Party who were in a position to repay the money. It was never the intention of the scheme that those grants should have been made and the Honourable Member knows that.

Therefore, I am surprised to hear some of the strictures in relation to that scheme today.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I really cannot sit and accept what the Honourable Member is saying. All of the persons who are granted assistance under the Medical Aid Scheme are assessed professionally. It is offensive for the Member to suggest that anybody benefitted as a matter of friendship. Clearly people who benefitted were people who were extremely ill. I think it should be struck from the record where Members are suggesting that anything was done on the basis of any friendship.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I believe that these are tactics to make me waste time....

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what point do you rise?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member is accusing us of using tactics. I made a specific point of order and I explained and you accepted the point of order. He has to withdraw saying that we were using tactics.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point.

Mr. L. R. TULL: As I was saying, Mr. Chairman, because the Honourable Member seems to have a very low comprehension level, I am not saying, Mr. Chairman....

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member cannot insult another Honourable Member by imputing improper things. He cannot be doing that. He cannot say that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. George South, could you withdraw the last part.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Saying that the Honourable Member has a low comprehension level?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I think you should withdraw that. It is very insulting.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, if you say to withdraw, I will.

The point that I was making is not that there was no medical evaluation of persons who applied and got assistance from the Medical Aid Scheme. The point I was making was their friends had their loans converted to grants and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West knows it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is implying that I know of loans that were converted to grants. No loan was converted to a grant without an evaluation, not a single one.

Mr. L. R. TULL: In respect of the question of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. A number of difficulties and problems were inherited by this administration and there are well known to the Other Side. For instance, there was low morale when the Government took over amongst the interns that you speak so eloquently about. During the last administration there were some interns who were paid at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and others who were not paid. So you had Barbadians who were graduates of the Medical School in the Faculties of the University of the West Indies, work together in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and some of them were paid monthly and others were not paid and it caused a great deal of confusion and disenchantment among members of the medical staff.

In addition to that, Sir, there were student nurses who were not paid. Student nurses for as long as I can remember, Sir, were paid while they were students and during the last administration Government decided to stop the payment of certain student nurses. 7.30p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was listening to the definition of thieving, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member knows that the teaching of nursing was transferred to the Community College and the Honourable Member knows that those students who are community college students first year and second year were just like any other student in the community college and were not paid. Students who were trained at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, all of them, as long as they went on the schedule they were given a stipend. Third year students were given $500. Second Year students were given $300 and First Year students were given a stipend. That is my recollection of what happened.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The point has been taken.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, again despite the intervention I stand by my position that during the last administration there were some student nurses who were favoured with the payment of stipends at the end of a month and others were working without pay. There is no point saying they were those at the Community College. I am talking about students who were doing on hand work in the hospital and medical institutions.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I challenge the Honourable Member to give to Your Honour the name of one student who fell in that category, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member, that is no point of order. Could you sit down?

Mr. L. R. TULL: The question was raised about the operations in the hospital lab, Sir. I have always been concerned about the fact that with the proliferation of the HIV pandemic that persons who go to the lab at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and have tests done were required to pay for the lab test. I am talking about persons who did the HIV test. We have had the situation where under the Ministry of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that certain persons in the lab of the hospital were being paid in excess of $300 000 a year without doing any lab tests. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West gave an undertaking to the lab attendants and assistants that he would have carried out an enquiry into the situation and because he did not, and he has already admitted that - he can get up and deny that too, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Sir, with all those interruptions, should I not get time for that?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has already admitted that he had decided to cany out an investigation into the complaints and never did.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir.'The Honourable Member is implying that I allowed somebody to make $300 000 without doing any work for it. I think, Sir, that with all due respect, it is not fair. There is only one person who is identifiable at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who would be responsible for carrying out tests on HIV positives. For him to say that, Sir, into the record is really to cast an aspersion without information on a professional person.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order.

Mr. L. R. TULL; The information that I have is also available to the Honourable Member, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have so many things to say, but since you say I have only a minute left there really is no point in continuing. I just want to make one single point finally that the question of the physical decrepitude of the hospital was raised before a lot from what I understand has been done in respect of that decrepitude. But what has never been addressed by the last administration when the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, who waxes so warm about every thing except what he should, when he was the Minister responsible he knew and also spoke to me about the amount of persons who were not working at the hospital who were drawing salaries weekly and monthly.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have never spoken, except to deny. When he says I spoke to him, I denied it when he came in here and said that. I told him I know of no such person and he said that I spoke to him, Sir. He should tell you what I said.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point has been taken. Continue.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will not continue. We will have to pick up the trends of this debate at a later stage when I will give chapter and verse relating to specific parts in Hansard where the Honourable Member has made a number of concessions. I will also use an opportunity as soon as we have another debate on health to raise questions as I said on the physical and systemic decrepitude of the hospital. I will go on to point out, Sir, the areas in which massive cuts were made in relation to many of the areas in which the Honourable Member complains about today.

In the period since this Government has taken over there is abundant evidence that the Government and the Honourable Minister of Health have taken serious action to confront the issues that have made serious changes to the afflictions that we had in the hospital, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time has expired.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Since my time has expired I shall have to deal with this at another time.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 36 stand part.

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

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

Head 42 was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. MissH. E. THOMPSON, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Resolution in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly. 7.40 p.m.

On the motion ofRt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER the Resolution was read a first, second and third time.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 8.30 p.m. this evening.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 8.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: With the House's permission we will now revert to Notices of Questions.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Question Number 72.

1. To ask the Minister of Health and the Environment: Will the Minister state:

Whether Government has commissioned a study to review the Greenland Landfill, St. Andrew and if so

(a) the terms and reference of the study,

(b) the persons contracted to do the study,

(c) the contract cost of the study,

(d) the reasons for commissioning the study and

(e) the results, if any, of the study?

Question Number 73.

2. To ask the Minister of Health and the Environment:

(1) Will the Minister state if, since the commencement of work at the Greenland Landfill, St. Andrew, any tests have been conducted to ascertain whether the impermeable liners are functional?

(2) Will the Minister state the results of any such tests and, if results have shown that the liners are not functional,

(a) the implications of any such problems for the completion and opening of the landfill, and
(b) any remedial action which is proposed to correct any such problem?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to have the items Government Notices recommitted in order to give notice of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of parcels of land at Trents, Orange Hill, Greenwich and Lancaster in the parish of St. James for road improvement.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no objections from the House then, so be it.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I also beg to ask that this particular Resolution be the instant Resolution to be dealt with as an instant order of the day.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no objections from the House then, so be it.

ORDER NO. 16 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT TRENTS, ORANGE HILL, GREENWICH, AND LANCASTER, ST. JAMES, FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker this is a Resolution for the acquisition of 64 parcels of land at Trents, Greenwich, Orange Hill and Lancaster in order to complete that aspect of the overlay programme related to this particular area.

It is part of The World Bank programme. We are hoping that in this package we will be able to widen that road leading from Holetown to Highway 2 A. At the junction of Highway 2 A we will be putting-in a roundabout and the road will be further extended just above the playing field at Lancaster Playing Field.

The contract for the work has already been awarded to C.O. Williams Construction Ltd. The work has already started. Excavation is about 25% complete. The urgency of this Resolution stems from the fact that even though we have not encountered much difficulty from the landowners there is still a slight possibility that there may be some resentment when the work proceeds a little further, especially seeing that the House will be on recess.

Mr. Speaker, there are no major issues pertaining to this particular Resolution. As I indicated, it is under the agreement with the World Bank that was initiated with the previous administration in 1992.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 17- RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF PARCELS OF LAND AT OISTINS, CHRIST CHURCH, MARTINDALES ROAD, ST. * MICHAEL, HAGGATT HALL, ST. MICHAEL, BOURNE'S LAND IN ST. CHRISTOPHER, CHRIST CHURCH AND WINDSOR TENANTRY, ST. GEORGE

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I had indicated to the House some time ago that at some time in the future the Division of Housing will be bringing certain amendments pertaining to these Resolutions so that some other means of vesting will be done rather than having to come to the House in order to vest lands in the National Housing Corporation on each occasion. But so far that legislation is not ready.

These various parcels of land are parcels which have been acquired by the Government for some time. It is proposed to vest the land into the National Housing Corporation so that they can be disposed of by the National Housing Corporation and the proceeds used in their capital works programme.

Most of them are very small parcels of land. With respect to the land at, if I may deal with them individually - Parcel (a) and (b) at Oistins were compulsorily acquired in 1991 for resiting of houses. At the moment there are two tenants and it is hoped that that land will be sold to those tenants.

The parcel of land at Martindales Road, presently there are 38 tenants occupying that land and they pay an annual rent of $9.60. It is also proposed to dispose of that land to those tenants.

Similarly at Haggatt Hall there are 14 tenants. It is proposed to convey those lands as well. And there is a similar position with respect to lands at Bourne's Land, St. Christopher, Oistins and at Windsor Tenantry.

The relevant Resolution has been certified by the Attorney General's Department and I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to identify the parcels that are in my constituency. I do not know whether the plan is available but the position is that the land at Oistins appears to me to be a bit of land which was acquired many years ago for the purpose of resiting tenants who were on the seaside of Oistins. It was acquired from the late Mr. Barnett.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: This is exactly the piece of land and I am very happy to see that at long last these tenants may be able to have their security of tenure regularised. This land has now been occupied by these tenants for a very long period of time. As a matter of fact, the land at the corner of Highway 7 is a piece of land on which the original building of Mr. Barnett is still situated and both the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central and myself are tenants of the estate because this is where the constituency office is.

There is a problem though, Sir, that has to be clearly identified and that is that there is no road to some of this land other than a very small area and although a right of way has been reserved over the land of Mr. Barnett only part of that has been made up.

I hope that the subdivision in parcel A, the 2705, that the right of way will be continued. It is a difficult area and at the present moment there is ^difficulty with having access to some of this land and I trust that before it is subdivided and sold off the access is improved. I see a 4.30 metre right of way. That is probably about 15 inches and I am not sure what 4.30 metres is.

With respect to the land at Bournes Land, again, if my memory serves me correct of that Bournes Land area, it has been the subject of requests for regularisation for many years. I want to emphasise that all of the legal hurdles have been removed. I would expect that there would be finalisation of these matters with equal rapidity as this Resolution is being dealt with today.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I give the Honourable Member tiie assurance that the matters that he alluded to will be dealt with at the earliest opportunity. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 18 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF LAND AT CHARNOCKS, CHRIST CHURCH, BAGATELLE, ST. JAMES, SPRING GARDEN, ST. MICHAEL, BRIDGE ROAD, ST. MICHAEL, VAUGHN'S LAND, ST. JOSEPH, LAKES FOLLY, ST. MICHAEL, WARRENS, ST. MICHAEL AND WARNERS, CHRIST CHURCH

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this is a similar Resolution for similar purposes. The parcel of land at Charnocks is a residual parcel of land along the ABC Highway. The parcel at Bagatelle, St. James represents the residual portion together with a dwelling house of a portion of land which we had acquired as part of the Ronald Mapp Highway. The owner at the time, Miss Patricia Turney, has not agreed to retain the property because the acquisition by Government came very close to the highway. Government has retained this property and it is now proposed to dispose of this property through the National Housing Corporation.

The parcel of land at Spring Garden is close to the Spring Garden Highway and it is part of a larger area of 18 737 square feet of land. The parcel at Bridge Road, St. Michael, is abutting and bounding on other lands of the Barbados Government and lands of Yvonne Wiggins, on lands of Deryk Lyder and it is also proposed to sell this parcel of land to an interested person.

Since the road works was constructed a bus lay-by has been built on the property and there is no special purpose for which the residue could be put to as a result of that improvement. The area of land at Vaughn's Road, Horse Hill is the site of a former public bath. The parcel of land at Lakes Folly is next to the American Life Insurance building and the parcel at Warrens, St. Michael is a residual portion along the ABC Highway together with the portion at Warners, Christ Church.

The parcel at Warners is also a residual portion of land at Warners, Christ Church. All of these parcels as I indicated will be vested in the National Housing Corporation and disposed of in the usual way to interested purchasers to assist the National Housing Corporation with its capital works programme.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ORDER NO. 4 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING OF LAND IN THE BARBADOS TOURISM INVESTMENT CORPORATION AT BAY STREET, SAINT MICHAEL

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation had requested this property from the Government as part of a development programme. The Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated is the successor organisation to the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation and I am therefore asking that the Resolution be amended accordingly to read that the property is being vested in the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated rather than the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass. Hon.

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

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

ORDER NO. 10 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF LAND AT MARINE GARDENS, CHRIST CHURCH

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this is a Resolution which seeks to vest 1 402 hectares of land at Marine Gardens in the National Housing Corporation. The Cabinet had agreed to the construction of a United Nations Building in Barbados to house the various offices of the United Nations. 8.50p.m.

At one stage, the Ministry of Housing was looking into the possibility of constructing this building. It was, however, felt that the National Insurance would be better placed to deal with the construction of the premises and it was decided that the property would be vested in the National Housing Corporation and disposed of by that statutory body to the National Insurance Department so as to finance the National Housing Corporation's capital works programme.

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

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be adjourned to Tuesday, November 10, 1998, at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the adjournment, I would like to say that this has been a long and exhausting session for us. Honourable Members on both sides are deserving of their summer break which is, of course, no longer a summer break. It is so often said, Mr. Speaker, that Members of Parliament are not held in high regard and there are some who said that we are lower than pond water. I would have to say that in this session here, men and women have worked, Honourable Members have worked very hard.

I know that when the House runs on through July and August into September it works particular hardship on Honourable Members who have young families or who have, for all kinds of reasons made, or would wish to have made arrangements for a vacation break which is usually the vacation period for most Barbadians. Some Honourable Members are in positions, in jobs where they would like to have had a break as well. That has not been the case and it very often is not the case. I regret the inconvenience that it has caused to Members particularly those who have not had time to spend with their children in the summer vacation. Now, of course, the summer vacation is over and that opportunity is lost. It does great damage to health and to family life and I am sorry for that.

I have to say how thankful I am to Members for the work they have put in here. To them I want to say particular thanks. We have had some big debates, we have 'had a Budget debate, we have had a foreign policy debate. I want to say thanks to all of those, Mr. Speaker, Sir, including your Clerks at the table, the Marshal and those who look after our well-being while we are here, the staff of Parliament, the reporters, those who cater to us, the security people who look after our security and not least of all, the Press, who have to soldier it through early or late and all sittings with us.

I trust that Honourable Members will have a good break and come back in November refreshed because there will be a long Order Paper when we get back in November.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would not like this occasipn to pass without saying a very special word of thanks and appreciation to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central who filled the gap today and was our Chairman of Committee. I think both sides of the House will join me in congratulating the Honourable Member for the very firm and fair way in which he conducted and presided over the conduct of the business of the House when it was in Committee. We are very grateful to the Honourable Member.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, to all Members including yourself, I wish a fine and a restful break.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, speaking on the adjournment, the Members on this Side would, too, like to

extend our great appreciation to Your Honour, to Members of the Clerk's table, Members of the Government side, members of the technical staff that work in Parliament and we, Sir, are very appreciative of the heavy schedule that the Government worked. We recognise that we have had an extended period of Parliamentary debate and I would say, Sir, that we in the Opposition, even though we are small in numbers are quite satisfied and from general feed back we accept that the contributions from this side of the House have been excellent contributions and we have had immaculate presentations by the Leader of the Opposition. We look forward, Sir, when we return after a break, during the hiatus and having had a rest, we look forward to debates during the Christmas season and into the 1999 year when we expect that we will be into our battle year and I hope that the debates of the Chamber will live up to the standard that has been sustained during the year.

Just one note that I would like to bring to the attention of the House while speaking on the adjournment. That is that on the last Sitting of the House, when I left the yard of Parliament, I have to indicate that the entire stretch of my car was scratched with either a nail or a tool where somebody scratched from the front to the back of my car. I think, that in Parliament when we have debates in this House, we must be able to sensitise Members, reporters and the public that these kinds of actions are really unnecessary. We are debating the people's business, there is no personal war in this Chamber.

I think that as we look forward to the new season, I think that we have to be conscious of the scenario that we set as Parliamentarians and that we must make the public aware that this is a national debate in the interest of the public. And maybe we may need more security, but certainly it is not a good sign and I hope that it will not happen again in the precincts of this Parliament.

I would like, Sir, to thank you for presiding and I would like to join with the Leader of the House in congratulating the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central who presided today in Committee and we on this Side was of the view that even though he was firm that he was fair in presiding over the Committee sessions today and we would like to thank him and congratulate him for his performance today.

With that, Sir, we would like to join with the Leader of the House to thank the staff, all those who prepare the meals and all those persons who assisted in the effective functioning of Parliament. We wish Members a good rest and we look forward to debates in the future.

The question that the House be adjourned to Tuesday, November 10, 1998 at 1 LOO o 'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 9.00 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, September 2, 1998 were deferred.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR 1

1. The Financial Institutions (Asset Classification and Provisioning) Regulations, 1998.

2. The Financial Institutions (Capital Adequacy) Regulations, 1998.

3. The Financial Institutions (Fees) Regulations, 1998.

4. Guarantees granted under the Exempt Insurance Act, Cap. 308A to:

    1. Aeroquib-Vickers Assurance Ltd.

    2. Bridgeco Indemnity Limited.

    3. General Mechanical Reinsurance Co. Ltd.

    4. Glenbrook Insurance Company Ltd.

    5. GMRC Holdings Limited.

    6. Missouri Reinsurance (Barbados) Inc.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER 2

The Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the Years 1995-96 and 1996-97.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

1. The Guarantee of Loans (Companies) Bill, 1998.

2. A Resolution to approve the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land at Oistins, Christ Church, Martindales Road, St. Michael, Haggatt Hall, St. Michael, Bournes Land, St. Christopher, Christ Church and Windsor Tenantry, St. George.

3. A Resolution to approve the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land at Charnocks, Christ Church, Bagatelle, St. James, Spring Garden, Nr. Brighton, St. Michael, Bridge Road, St. Michael, Vaughan's Road, Horse Hill, St. Joseph, Lakes Folly, St. Michael, Warrens, St. Michael and Warners, Christ Church.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON

1. Question 1 re expenditure on (a) Commission of Inquiry on Public Service vehicles (b) St. Joseph Hospital Commission of Inquiry and (c) The Commission of Inquiry on Casino Gambling.

2. Question 2 re (a) Appointment of Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Special Envoys; (b) Duties and responsibilities of such Ambassadors and Envoys; (c) Emoluments, other allowances, travel expenses and (d) Reports of Ambassadors or Envoys.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER..... 2

1. Guarantee of Loans (Companies) Bill, 1998.

ELECTION OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER..... 2

Appointment of Mr. J. M. Edghill as Chairman of Committees for the Sitting.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 3;

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 14 - BILL ENTITLED AN ACT TO AMEND THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT ACT..... 3

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 3; Mr. B. M. Taitt, 6; Hon. Sir Harold St. John, 14; Rt. Hon. L. E. Sandiford, 17; Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, 19; Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, 22; Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 24.

ORDER NO. 11 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) ORDER, 1998.....24

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 24.

ORDER NO. 13 - BILL TO AMEND CERTAIN

ENACTMENTS RELATING TO PENSIONS . . 24

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 24.

ORDER NO. 9 - BILL TO AMEND CERTAIN ACTS RELATING TO INSURANCE 25

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 25; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 26; Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 27.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss'B. A. MILLER .....

28

Resolution to grant the sum of $20 930 113 from the Consolidated Fund to supplement the Estimates 1998-99 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates, No. 1.

ORDER NO. 15 - BILL TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT, CAP. 73 28

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 28.

ORDER NO. 8 - RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF $20 930 113 FROM THE CON SOLIDATED FUND 29

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE.....29

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 29; Mr. B. M. Taitt, 30.

HEAD 19 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS 31

Rt. Hon. O. S.Arthur, 31.

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY GENERAL 31

Rt. Hon. O.S.Arthur, 31.

HEAD 35 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT..... 32

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 32.

HEAD 36 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.....32

Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, 32; Mr. J. O. Tudor, 34; Mr. W. C. C. Callender, 38; Hon. Sir Harold St. John, 40; Mr. B. M. Taitt, 42; Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 44; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 47; Mr. L. R. Tull, 53.

RESUMPTION

QUESTION TIME Mr.

J. O. Tudor, 55.

1. Question re Greenland Landfill, St. Andrew.

2. Question re tests at Greenland Landfill.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. G. W. Payne, 56.

Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Trents, Orange Hill, Greenwich and Lancaster, St. James.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (resumed)

ORDER NO. 16 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT TRENTS, ST. JAMES 56

Hon. G. W. Payne, 56.

ORDER NO. 17 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF LAND SITUATE AT OISTINS, CHRIST CHURCH . . . 56

Hon. G. W. Payne, 5.6.

ORDER NO. 18 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF LAND AT CHARNOCKS, CHRIST CHURCH 57

Hon. G. W. Payne, 57.

ORDER NO. 4 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE BARBADOS TOURISM INVESTMENT CORPORATION OF LAND SITUATE AT BAY STREET, ST. MICHAEL 58

Hon. G. W. Payne, 58.

ORDER NO. 10 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF LAND SITUATE AT MARINE GARDENS, CHRIST CHURCH 58

Hon. G. W. Payne, 58.

SUSPENSIONS ..... 14, 55.

ADJOURNMENT 58

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 58; Mr. J. O. Tudor, 58.

SPEAKERS IN **THIS ISSUE**

ARTHUR, Rt. Hon. O. S. (St. Peter) CALLENDER, Mr. W. C. C. (Christ Church East) CHELTENHAM, Dr. R. L. (St. Joseph) MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East) PAYNE, Hon. G. W. (St. Andrew) SANDIFORD, Rt. Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South) St. JOHN, Hon. Sir HAROLD (Christ Church South) TAITT, Mr. B. M. (St. Michael West) **TUDOR, Mr. J. O. (St. Michael** East) **TULL, Mr. L. R. (St. George South) THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John) THOMPSON, Hon. Miss H. E. (St. James South)**