

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 - 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, December 1, 1999.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Wednesday, December 1, 1999.

PRESENT

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P., (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc, (Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs) (Minister of the Civil Service)

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

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

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc, (Econ.)

Hon. G. W. PAYNE (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources)

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform)

Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.-P. (Minister of Housing and Lands)

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL (Minister of Public Works and Transport)

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY (Minister of Social Transformation)

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B.

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

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY (Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Mr. D. T. GILL, B.Sc.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., M.A. (Minister of Industry and International Business)

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, November 23, 1999.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the Honourable the House of Assembly of its meeting of Tuesday, November 23, 1999, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

PAPERS

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

1. The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) Order, 1999.
2. The Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order, 1999.
3. The Civil Establishment (Part-Time Officers) Order, 1999.
4. The Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 1999.
5. The Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 1999.
6. The Ombudsman (Salary) Order, 1999.
7. The Parliament (Administration) (Salaries) Order, 1999.
8. The Judges (Salaries) Order, 1999.

Hon. R. N. GREENEDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Report of the Department of Labour for the year 1999.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Finance for the payment of the principal and interest in respect of a loan to the Transport Board of US\$15 million from CIBC Caribbean Limited for the purchase of a fleet of 110 new buses.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just gave notice of a Resolution to enable us to acquire a large fleet of buses for the Transport Board. I had previously indicated to the House that I would wish the House to go on vacation on December 14th and in the circumstances, notwithstanding what looks like a very long Order Paper today, I would like Honourable Members to agree to do the Resolution for the Transport Board later on in today's Sitting.

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 4 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1999

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I begin the debate that hopefully the House would give approval for an increase in wages for all persons paid out of the Consolidated Fund for the period April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2001. At the outset, Sir, may I say that I would have wished if the House would have been in a position today to legislate a wage settlement that has been fully agreed to by all unions involved in negotiation on behalf of all the public officers.

Unhappily, Sir, I am not in that position. I am only in a position to invite the House to legislate a wage settlement that has been agreed to by the one union, the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW) which is the union that represents the largest proportion of persons paid from the Consolidated Fund. I have at the outset to say that I am doing this conscious of the fact that the other unions and associations which fall under the auspices of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations have not found it possible to concur in the settlement agreed to with the NUPW although the difference, Mr. Deputy Speaker, between what their final position was and what NUPW agreed to was so small as to be virtually inconsequential.

I want also to say, Sir, that this again highlights the difficulties of negotiation in circumstances where multi-unions represent the same category of public officers. We are obviously having this matter brought to the House putting us beyond a situation where the Government could be put to the ridiculous circumstance of having the same category of public workers paid different increases merely because they happen to be represented by different trade unions and associations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not the first time we are being put to the necessity of having to legislate salaries without the full concurrence of the trade unions. It is not something in which we take a delight but it is necessary in the circumstances and I will be asking the House in the course of this debate to support the position that the Government has adopted in this particular instance. I ask for that support, Sir, because it is the Government's judgment as it is the judgment of the NUPW that the increase is fair and reasonable and it is entirely consistent with the precepts and the specific provisions of the protocol for implementation of a social partnership. In fact, Sir, this wage settlement is entirely consistent with the provisions of that partnership. It

is also designed to continue to protect the general interest of the Barbadian economy and to reinforce the purposes of an incomes policy as a continuing factor in ensuring our competitiveness in a world where competition is indeed sharpening.

I ask the House's support for this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because in the circumstances good judgment and good sense have prevailed and what we are settling upon is affordable and it is a settlement that would enable us to speak with greater confidence of a competitive economy in Barbados.

I must, however, reinforce the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are today only considering the approval for increases in wages. There are additional matters that will redound to the benefit of public workers and if I may be specific, Sir, increases in allowances, the repayment of the eight per cent and the regrading which will not be encompassed by the specific Resolution before the House but which taken together will all redound to the material and the financial benefit of the public service of Barbados.

The point I am making, Sir, is that if we were to add to the wage increases being debated today the request for improved terms and conditions by way of allowances and further add to that the repayment of the eight per cent and further add to that the request for regrading, then we would see that we are contemplating a substantial improvement in the financial conditions of public servants in Barbados over the course of the next few years.

I want to set the matter first of all broadly in its contextual framework and then I will spell out to the House the basic background to the salary negotiations and why we have concluded with the NUPW and why the settlement is fairly reasonable. I will have a responsibility to spell out to the House as well the implications of the settlement both from the financial point of view as well as from an overall effect on the national economy. I also think I should speak in this debate on some of the issues pertaining to the repayment of the eight per cent; the regrading exercise; the settlement of allowances and other matters that are still outstanding between the Government and the unions. 11.25a.m.

I begin, Sir, with the broad conceptual framework. This wage settlement has to be judged within the context of the provision of Protocol III for the implementation of a social partnership for the period 1998 to the year 2000. At Clause 16(1) of that social contract it is prescribed and I quote:

"The social partners agree that the Incomes Policy which forms part of the Social Compact shall operate in accordance with the following policies and procedures:

- (a) there shall be a general restraint on increases in basic wages and salaries in both the public and the private sectors;
- (b) the restraint on increases in basic wages and salaries will apply to all remuneration under contract of employment for any kind of work to be performed wholly or substantially within Barbados."

I reinforce the point therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that under the existing Protocol that constitutes the framework for the execution of an incomes policy, it is recognised that our economic and social purposes can only be accomplished if we continue to be committed to the practices and the purposes of restraint in the increase of basic wages and salaries.

Sir, we are not here speaking in terms of wage cuts as was the case of the early 1990s. We are not speaking in terms of wage freezes as was the case between 1992 and 1993. We are speaking in terms of having a framework for wage increases that relate those wage increases to objective factors that have a meaning for the preservation of the competitive position of this Barbados economy.

We saw in the early 1990s, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fearful consequences that can ensue when a small open developing country allowed its wage rates and the level of its wages to rise at a faster level than those of its main trading partners; to rise at a faster level than international inflation and to rise at a faster level than its domestic productivity. The consequences were, that by the early 1990s, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after an accumulation of bad practices, Barbados found itself in a position where it was not only uncompetitive but where desperate measures had to be instituted which we hope would never again have to be instituted in this country to restore competitive balance to the Barbadian society.

Consequently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a commitment to wage restraint, meaning that the level of wage increases has to be set within a framework that would prevent us from going back to those days that triggered an economic holocaust in this country. Wage restraint means that you have to take into account, Mr. Deputy Speaker, considerations such as the growth of the economy; the level of prices; the state of our foreign exchange reserve and the need to put our country on a sustainable development such that our costs of production are not rising faster than those of our main competitors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not theory, if a country's cost of production continues to rise faster than those of its main competitors, it will have a tremendous difficulty selling goods and services in the marketplace. In

our instance, not only is the wage cost the largest proportion of our cost but from a public sector point of view, our wage bill has now reached the point where Government is now paying \$700 million in wages per year. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a considerable amount and quite obviously, the control of the growth in that public sector wage bill will be a considerable determinant as to whether the Government will have large or small deficits and therefore by implication, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will have a profound bearing on whether we can succeed in avoiding fiscal induced balance of payment expenses in this society.

I am pleased to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that everybody who was involved in this wage negotiation understood that we had to send a signal, by the nature of the settlement that the Government was serious, as was the social partners, in our commitment to the use of an incomes policy as a continuing factor in not only stabilising our competitiveness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but enhancing it.

May I say, Sir, that throughout this debate, please let us recognise that this increase in the wage rates is but one of four ways by which the wage bill of Government is anticipated to be increased over the course of the next two years. I must stress the point, Sir, that this is only part of the matter. That we are also shortly going to have to bring to account increases in allowances, the repayment of the eight per cent and we will have to increase the wage bill in the public sector by a general regrading of the public service. The settlement that has been arrived at by the unions has been couched in an understanding on all sides that it is not the only thing on the table at this time between the Government and the unions that can affect how much public officers will take home.

Sir, I want to give the House the background to this particular matter. I will explain why we are where we are today, in circumstances where we are bringing before Parliament a settlement that has been agreed to by one union but has not been agreed to by others.

Sir, earlier this year the various trade unions and staff associations submitted proposals on increased wages and improved conditions to the Government to form an agreement covering the period April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2001. We are bringing this to the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after ten meetings between the various trade unions and staff associations which led to a situation where the NUPW was in a position to reach a settlement on October 25, 1999, but which, unfortunately, found us not able to reach full accommodation with the unions and associations covered by CTUSAB.

May I say, Sir, that CTUSAB submitted their proposals to Government on March 30, 1999, the NUPW submitted

theirs on April 29, 1999 and the Police Association submitted theirs on May 5, 1999. The proposals of all these bodies, Sir, in every instance referred to a request for an increase in salaries and wages for the period April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2001; the payment of productivity bonus to cover the previous financial year April 1, 1998 to March 31, 1999; the repayment of the eight per cent and an increase in various allowances to public officers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NUPW like the rest of the unions under the auspices of CTUSAB initially made proposals asking the Government for 10% over two years - 6% in the first year and 4% in the second year as well as they requested us to bring to account a request for a productivity bonus. CTUSAB, as I have said, Sir, also asked for 10% over the course of the two years and asked in addition for a productivity bonus of 12%.

After much discussion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and many meetings, we were able to get the NUPW to agree to a settlement of 4% in the first year and 2.5% in the second year on the understanding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that within that 6.5%; that 0.5% would constitute the productivity bonus to which the Government had been committed and to which I previously referred. As regard the process involving the other trade unions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, CTUSAB put on the table initially 10% over a two-year period: 11.35a.m.

The Government in good faith has gone through an extensive process of negotiations with CTUSAB and we have changed our position on many occasions. But having put 10% on the table in the first year, CTUSAB made a first change by letter of August of this year when they changed from 10% over two years, to 8% in the first year and 2% compounded in the second year. Effectively therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker increasing their proposal from 10% to effectively 10-12% over two years.

Subsequent to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, CTUSAB again varied its offer moving from 8% in the first year and 2% in the second to 7% in the first year to 3% in the second year. Throughout all of this period when we were seeking for this matter to be brought to a happy conclusion, CTUSAB started with 10% over two years and the only adjustments that they have made over the period was to reconfigure how that 10% was going to be computed.

An essential point about all this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that it was only after the Government reached a conclusion with the NUPW on October 25, and after we had settled with NUPW that CTUSAB moved from the 10% down to a position on the understanding that they would want us to continue to negotiate to see if we could reach a separate conclusion with them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government has negotiated in good faith with the NUPW. The settlement with the NUPW was reached taking into account the interest of the worker; the state of the economy; the state of the public finances; plus the fact that there were also on the table additional proposals by the trade unions for improvement in the conditions of the pay of the public servants of Barbados to take the form not just as wage increases, but as I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of improvement in allowances, repayment of the eight per cent and the regrading as well.

The NUPW put a very enlightened position to the Government. We had agreed that a productivity bonus would be payable to the public officers upon the basis of an independent study done by an independent assessor. Nobody was able to identify on the union side who that independent assessor or evaluator was going to be. But, rough calculations done, suggested that productivity in the public sector increased by about $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% in the last financial year. The NUPW put to us the very enlightened position that rather than pay the public servants a one-off cash payment as a productivity bonus, to take the $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% and incorporate it in the wage settlement, so that for every year thereafter the public servants will get the benefit of that productivity bonus and that it will count to their pensions, to the extent that it will form part of their income.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have agreed with the NUPW that rather than have a one-shot productivity payment that $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% of this settlement will be the productivity payment, but that it will be part of the wage increase. Hence, Sir, the workers will benefit every year thereafter, rather than this year alone by the one half of 1% and more importantly, it will count towards the computation of their pensions in a way that paying them a $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% this year would not have.

On the precept, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the greater good, the Government has embraced the enlightened position of the NUPW. That explains why therefore we could come to this House with a proposed settlement of 4% in the first year, 2.5% in the second year, on the understanding that the productivity bonus of $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% is part of the permanent increase and hence the permanent benefit payable to the public servants of Barbados.

Sir, CTUSAB is still holding out for a cash payment. We feel that the proposal of the NUPW benefits and CTUSAB has now dropped its productivity bonus request from 12% to 7%. We feel however, as all people should really feel that incorporating it into the settlement is better.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, as I said, eventually what CTUSAB was prepared to put on the table was not very different, it was about $\frac{1}{2}$ % more than what the NUPW was prepared to settle for. I think that it is a very material consideration, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that those adjustments by CTUSAB were only made after the Government had reached a settlement with the NUPW. In fact, we could have become involved in what I must call quite frankly, an unseemly game of one-upmanship if we were to put ourselves in a position where we settled with one trade union and went behind that trade union's back and settled with another set of trade unions for conditions that were slightly more favourable, merely to give the second set of trade unions the advantage of being able to say that they were able to extract from the Government a more favourable settlement than the union that was prepared to settle with the Government in the first instance.

The Government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does not feel that wage negotiations for Barbadian public servants should be shrouded in any context of one-upmanship. We are aware, Sir, that there is still that element of competition between trade unions. We would like to be able to work toward a situation where, on the question of increases in wages for public servants, insofar as the same category of workers in the final analysis must be paid the same thing, we would be really delighted if the unions representing public workers could better coordinate their negotiating strategy to prevent us from having this awesome and awful situation where we have to contemplate the appearance of legislating salaries, merely as to avoid paying the same people different salaries.

Sir, that constitutes the background on the wage aspect of this Resolution. As I said, Sir, the difference between the NUPW and CTUSAB is not so large as to have caused any rancour between CTUSAB and the Government. I am delighted to say, Sir, that discussion on other aspects of the whole package for public servants is continuing and that allows me, Sir, to deal with the question of the repayment of the eight per cent.

As you are aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1991, the then Democratic Labour Party cut public servants salaries by 8%. This matter was legally settled in a court of law and it was determined that there was no legal obligation for the Government of Barbados to repay the eight per cent; that the then Government was on proper legal grounds in carrying out the provision of existing legislation that empowered a Government of Barbados to vary the emoluments of public officers of Barbados.

We feel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that although there is no legal obligation to the extent that the public servants of Barbados were called upon to carry a disproportionate part of the burden of the adjustment in the early 1990s to create the basis for sustained subsequent development, we feel that it

December 1, 1999

would be in the nature of a just reparation if the public servants of Barbados were to be repaid that eight per cent, if our circumstances allow. 11.45a.m.

The Government feels that after six years of sustained economic growth with the prospect of further sustained growth for the future; now that we have put our fiscal house in order; now that we have put our external position in relatively good order and now that there is a general new prosperity in the society to which the public servants have contributed in very substantial proportion; we believe, that it is right and appropriate at this time to repay that eight per cent.

The issue has become a political issue with the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) saying two things and we must deal with these. Firstly, that it should be paid back at once. Secondly, they are trying to convey the impression that it was always within their contemplation to repay the eight per cent. We really hope that the politics of this now will end.

Sir, the eight per cent which amounted to more than \$60 million was taken out of the economy in the early 1990's over a period of eighteen months. To put \$60 million of purchasing power in our economy now in one fell swoop could put great strain on our economy particularly, as I have said before, there is evidence of excessive consumption and demand in Barbados even as I speak. There is no point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our trying to solve a problem by creating a bigger one. There is absolutely no evidence at all that would substantiate the claims by the Opposition that there was ever any intention by the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) to repay a penny of this eight per cent - not a thread of evidence.

Sir, I had to deal with this today to put this matter to rest once and for all. In 1991, when the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) was contemplating cutting the public workers' salaries by eight per cent, the unions of the day told the then Government that they would have been prepared to allow the Government to treat the eight per cent as a loan by the public workers to the Government. The unions told the Government to issue a bond to the public workers that would have committed the Government to repay the eight per cent to the extent that there was a bond that says the Government of Barbados commits itself sometime in the future to repay this eight per cent. The unions also told the Government to issue bonds that carry the good name of the Government of Barbados in support of it.

This, however, was what was put out to the public servants on that occasion, and I will read it, Sir. It starts with

a Memorandum from the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Civil Service to all Permanent Secretaries and dated September 5, 1991.

"As you may also be aware, considerable discussion has taken place between representatives of the various unions and staff associations which represent public employees on matter relating to conditions of service on whether an alternative course of action could have been possible. Those discussions gave long and earnest consideration to the feasibility of structuring an arrangement for treating any part of emoluments withheld from employees as a deferred payment which would have been secured by the issue of a bond. Regrettably, the size of the deferred payment which would have been necessary under such other arrangements to achieve the desired savings would have resulted in an impracticable scheme which would have been complicated to administer and unattractive to the participants. In the circumstances of the required level of the expenditure reduction, any further attempt to improve the attractiveness of the bond to perspective holders would have compromised the attainment of the savings' target. That proposal cannot be effectively implemented and is no longer being pursued."

Sir, on September 5, 1991, the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) told the public servants, they were not prepared to contemplate the repayment of this money to them in the future by the issue of bonds which say that the Government will treat it as a deferred payment and they will get it back sometime in the future.

I go further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John goes on record as saying that he might have done it between 1994 and 1999. I want to remind him, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of things that he said in this House when he had his only opportunity to present a budget to this Parliament. He said then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to be very accurate. I am citing the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals by the Honourable Mr. David J. H. Thompson, Minister of Finance, Monday, March 28, 1994.

"In that regard, we have a mutually satisfactory relationship with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They understand us and we understand them. They know clearly what we are prepared to do and when, and we know what they want us to do and when. On the basis of that understanding, we hope to conclude our discussions on an Enhanced Surveillance Programme with them shortly."

The first point I am establishing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this, that the Honourable Member for St. John would have had a secret deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to have Barbados under the auspices of an Enhanced

Surveillance Programme, but there is more to it than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Honourable Member for St. John went to his Cabinet on October 29, 1993 and told the Cabinet about the discussions which had taken place between the Democratic Labour Party, his Ministry and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He said these things and this is in the record of the Government of Barbados. Among the matters discussed was an Enhanced Surveillance Programme which the Honourable Member for St. John told us that he was on the point of concluding with the International Monetary Fund, and it said this:

"The International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials had indicated that the conditions which would apply to Barbados under such a programme would be even more onerous than under a standby arrangement."

There was a standby arrangement in 1991 and the Honourable Member for St. John was going to take us under an Enhanced Surveillance Programme from 1994 onward. Yet, he was telling his Cabinet on October 29, 1993, that the provisions of that Enhanced Surveillance Programme would have been more onerous. Sir, if there is any doubt, May 27, 1994, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Enhanced Surveillance Programme, Transport Board fares to increase from \$1.25 to \$1.75 and National Housing rent to be increased. On May 12, the Minister of Finance informs Cabinet that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission dealing with the above-mentioned programme was due in Barbados. He said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was not going to send a mission unless Cabinet had taken a decision on the Transport Board fare structure. The Honourable Joseph O. Tudor was asked to bring the necessary Cabinet Paper.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Under the Enhanced Surveillance Programme, Mr. Deputy Speaker, bus fares and house rent would have been increased.

I go further, Sir, it is not common knowledge, but the Democratic Labour Party was not in a position to draw down the last set of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) funds in 1993 because under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme they were not supposed to restore salaries to the 1991 levels, but they did so. I want to stress the point, that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) refused to allow Barbados to draw down the last set of money under the standby arrangement because the Government restored the salaries in 1993 to the 1991 levels. Could you then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, contemplate the situation where the same International Monetary Fund (IMF) would have us again under an Enhanced Surveillance Programme and would agree to the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) restoring the eight per cent when in fact they suspended the 1993 draw

down because the Government was prepared to let the wages go back to the 1991 levels? Sir, if there is any doubt in this matter at all, there is a document called the Structural Adjustment Strategy of February 1994 that was prepared by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and the Central Bank of Barbados in association with the Ministry of Trade and Industry. 11.55a.m.

This document, Sir, was the last economic will and testament of the Democratic Labour Party. It was intended, as it said:

"This document attempts to undertake the task of spelling out the processes and the mechanisms which are being employed to implement a programme of medium-term macroeconomic measures."

We are still in the medium there, Sir.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have gone through this because this is supposed to spell out everything that the Democratic Labour Party would have done over the medium-term. It spoke about the Value Added Tax (VAT). The Democratic Labour Party now wants to create the impression that they are opposed to a VAT. It says quite clearly that the DLP was going to introduce a VAT of 15%. We knew that, Sir, so we should not be surprised.

It also said, if there is any doubt, Sir, at page 2:

"A complex system of consumption taxes and stamp duties is being replaced by a broad-based value-added tax on goods and services at a modest rate in the region

It also went on to say something about severance payments:

"...Severance payments have been made less burdensome to companies and further changes are being considered..."

This is page 7, Sir. I want to repeat that, Sir. This is the DLP's Structural Adjustment Strategy that was left by the Honourable Member for St. John as his legacy to management in Barbados that severance payments have been made less burdensome, not to poor persons but to companies and further changes are being considered.

All the talk about the small workers, then they cut the public workers' salaries and further changes to the severance payments are being considered to make them less burdensome. I continue, Sir:

"...These will facilitate the replacement of low productivity jobs..."

Those are the small people, Sir.

"...by high productivity jobs in other firms of sectors..."

Ail of that was planned.

I have gone through it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the greatest care. I can see no evidence in the medium-term macro structural adjustment strategy of the Democratic Labour Party that there was ever any intention to repay the eight per cent at any time in the foreseeable future.

I believe the time has come now that the Democratic Labour Party must either put up or shut up. Far from that, we would have now been labouring under an IMF Enhanced Surveillance Programme with the massive introduction of user fees, because in addition to the bus fares and the house rents the Democratic Labour Party had already agreed that Barbadians attending the University of the West Indies would have to pay to attend.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: That had already been agreed and there would have been no possibility, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the course of the last four years if the DLP had its way of any repayment of the eight per cent because the IMF would never have agreed to that at all. It was not within the measures, as the Honourable Member for St. John says.

I want to repeat him, Sir.

"...They understand us and we understand them. They know clearly what we are prepared to do and when. We know what they want us to do and when..."

Now, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John has gone on record as having said that the IMF knew what they were prepared to do and when. I want him to produce the evidence that the IMF agreed to the repayment of that eight per cent and tell us when they said it was going to be repaid because he said clearly that agreement had been reached.

The time must come, Sir, when this whole sordid - it is a sordid political travesty being perpetrated by the Democratic Labour Party has to be stopped. In fact, there has been no remorse by the Democratic Labour Party over having cut the eight per cent. A member admitted that if they had it to do again they would do it all over again. They said so. Now they want to gain cheap political credit by blaming people because I have heard the Honourable Member speak

in this House with a sense of outrage, "Why don't the Government give back the eight per cent" as if we cut it.

I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speak in a frenzied way, which is not unusual, about how the Government is wicked for not giving back the eight per cent as if we were the people who had cut it.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The only thing I could not promise the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is that the money was not enough for me to give him the \$ 175 million airport he is asking me for in St. Lucy. I promise him that I would rather give the poor people of St. Lucy the house spots he is not asking for than the airport that he wants.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. It is clear to me that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. It is also clear to me that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing because I have already had a tour with the Honourable Member for St. George North and identified the house spots I would like in St. Lucy.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I want the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to confirm that the house spots are not to be put on the same site as the international airport because there has never been a case in history where one has been able to land a jet on a housing scheme so I want that assurance otherwise we cannot proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Peter has asked me to clarify something. I can assure, you, Sir, that nowhere on Spring Garden have I asked the Honourable Member for St. George North to put a house spot.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I take it, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy still wants the airport for St. Lucy. All I can tell him is that this Government is rightly regarded of being capable of very mighty accomplishment but I do not think that even with the greatest skill in the world that we would be able to secure the resources to afford the luxury of two international airports in this country. He will have to wait patiently until another dispensation proves capable of being able to support such an indulgence but not for the time being. I will have to tell the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that I am not in a position to contemplate it.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is giving the House the impression that he would not be able to find \$60 million to build an airport in St. Lucy. It cannot be true because this is the same Government that just imploded a hotel that cost more than \$60 million.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: When the Honourable Member manages to get the muscle and perhaps that is not long coming, to be able to get the Democratic Labour Party to agree to put an airport in St. Lucy in their Manifesto, then I will begin to take him seriously, but until that point comes I will have to treat him....

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again. He is giving the impression it was never in a Manifesto. It was there since 1975.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I must go on. The last point by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy just reinforced my point that since the Democratic Labour Party has ignored putting an airport in St. Lucy for 25 years, who am I to change course? I press on, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the matter of the fine-tuning of the repayment of the eight per cent is now with us. I say fine-tuning because in addition to this wage increase the Government has effectively reached an accommodation with the NUPW that the \$60 million that was taken out of the salaries of the public servants of Barbados between 1991 and 1993 will be paid back in three instalments over an 18-month period. 12.05 p.m.

I want to stress, Sir, that we have agreed with the NUPW that the \$60 million will be paid back in three instalments over an eighteen-month period. It was also agreed that on the occasions when these payments are being made, Savings Bonds attracting an interest rate of 7½% as well as Treasury Notes attracting an interest rate of 1½% will be made available to these public officers to enable them if they so wish to use the repayment of the eight per cent to purchase savings instruments. These rates as you would realise, Sir, are far more attractive than the 5% they would get if they put the money on a bank.

We have also agreed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Treasury Notes could be traded on the Stock Exchange of Barbados and we have also agreed that any interest payable on any Treasury Notes to be taken up by the public servants of Barbados will be free of withholding tax. Let me stress the point, Sir, that we have agreed with the NUPW that we will repay the \$60 million equivalent of the eight per cent in three tranches, that at the time when these payments are to be made the public officers will be given the option, if they so wish, of being able to purchase notes and bonds attracting very healthy interest rates and on the understanding that the interest on those will be not subject to tax.

I believe Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is as fair and as reasonable as we can conclude, particularly at a time when,

as I said, the Barbados economy has a bit of excess demand confronting it and we do not want to do anything that would put us in a position where we frustrate the sustainable development of the Barbados economy by having too rapid a build-up in purchasing power.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the issues before us as well has been the question of payment of allowances. Government, at the time of every wage negotiation entertains requests for improvements in allowances to public servants but I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a certain amount of reasonableness must obtain on the part of some section of the public service. In addition to the \$700 million we spent on wages the Government of Barbados spent \$23 million on allowances for various categories of public servants. Of that \$23 million, \$5 million was for the police alone. So the police represent 1 000 of 25 000 public servants but they got \$5 million of the \$23 million in allowances.

It would be interesting to hear the range of allowances that have been built up over time not just by this administration but by others payable to the police. There is a category of entertainment allowance, this is not general but only paid for a very few. They get washing allowances; plain clothes allowances; detective allowances; uniform allowances; special operations allowances; duty allowances; overtime allowances; travel allowances; telephone allowances and they get special allowances as well. Over a period of time a very generous category of allowances have been put in place, entertainment; washing; plain clothes; uniforms; special operations duty allowances...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is misleading the House, Sir. He is giving the impression that every police officer gets those allowances. It should be mentioned in this House that there are only particular officers. A detective is not everybody. This could easily be picked up as saying that the police officers get all of these allowances and the same thing can be said for other organisations where certain people get certain allowances.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was very careful to say that all of the allowances do not apply to every police officer but I spoke to the range of allowances. I was speaking not to a view to hold a brief against the police force but just to say that it is in truth, that within the limits of the financial resources of this country every reasonable accommodation has been made to deal with the requirements of the police force. We would not be able to do more. It is not true to try to cast the impression that the police force of Barbados has been allowed to languish when in fact there is a very attractive range of allowances that have been put in place to the point that it is incontrovertible that of the \$23 million of allowances paid to the entire civil

service accounting for 25 000 public officers, all of whom are loyal Barbadians and doing a good job, \$5 million of that has been paid to the police alone. That is the reality. What is before us on this Table, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a request for \$14 million more on top of the \$5 million. They are getting \$5 million out of \$23 million and they want \$14 million on top of it, on top of the wage increases and on top of the regrading.

That cannot be reasonable, particularly if you make the case as they want to make the case, Sir, that they have to be treated as different from everybody else in Barbados. It cannot be fair. We also have nurses who are struggling. There are firemen who face conditions which are not dissimilar and we have a defence force where members do not get pension nor gratuities. That cannot be right, Sir.

I want to make the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Government is also prepared, in addition to the wage increase that I am asking the House to approve, we are also prepared, as is the case ordinarily, to improve the allowances payable to various categories of public servants, to be fair in how those increases are allowed. We also have to pay some attention to the impact on the public purse.

I am asking therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for persons to be more temperate in the kind of claims they would want to put on the resources of the taxpayers of Barbados, particularly if there is clear evidence that over a period of time successive administrations have been willing to accommodate requests for improvement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I stress the point because the record of our administration - others can speak to their record - over the course of the last four years in treating to the needs of the public service is impressive. Not only have we paid increases in each year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we have improved the amount that can be derived as vehicle loans; broadened the categories to which vehicle loans can be applied; extended the period of repayment of vehicle loans from five years to seven years and put more people on the travelling schedule. 12.15p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have substantially improved the pension conditions applicable to the public service of Barbados. The whole significance of that, Sir, was this. That there was a period in our recent history, as you know, Sir, where public servants toiled in acting appointments or temporary appointments for considerable periods but the time spent in a temporary appointment was not counted towards a person's pension. A public officer could come to the end of his career and found himself acting in a position for many years but would go home and the pension he would

draw would bear no relationship to the responsibilities he carried. As you know, Sir, there was a period where public officers were made to act for an extended period of time and his pension was related to a lower salary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1996 we amended the Pensions Act in the computation of retired benefits to allow emoluments earned while persons were acting in higher posts as well as emoluments earned in temporary posts, to count in the computation of a person's pension entitlement. That has been of enormous benefits to a wide category of public officers who would have found themselves in the distressing situation of having to act for long periods of time.

We went further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we made the amendment effective from December 1, 1992, although the legislation was brought in 1996. We back-dated it to carry as many people as possible and to improve their conditions. We understood that a lot of people were in financial distress between 1991 and 1994 and we improved them substantially.

Sir, in the increased allowances, the police have benefitted substantially from improvements in their washing allowances, uniform allowances and in every allowance since 1994 as the Attorney General read out last week.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have not only brought the legislation that would confirm casual employees in permanent posts but by that one stroke we have improved the financial circumstances of former casual employees by the extent of \$2.25 million a year in the form of improved pension and gratuity payments.

I do not have the time Mr. Deputy Speaker, to go into the way in which the Government has improved the circumstances of public officers by the amount that we have spent on training. More especially so, Sir, by the new arrangements that have been put in place to allow persons who have no competence in computing technology to be trained in new information technology - not at their expenses but at the expense of the public of Barbados. We now have a programme in process that will suffice to ensure that public officers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are to become computer literate as part of the general effort to improve the productivity in our civil service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will soon be in a position to announce the extent by which we are going to increase allowances to all categories of public officers. I stress the point, that we will soon be in a position to announce the extent to which we are going to improve the allowances paid to all categories of public officers to complement the 6.5% increase in wages payable over the course of the next two years.

Sir, I am also saying that we have imbalances to redress and that in much the same way as we have looked after certain categories in the past, there are some public officers who have long-standing grievances that have to be met. I want particularly to say, Sir, that beginning the next financial year, the Defence Force hopes to have in place a scheme whereby for the first time, members of the Barbados Defence Force, like other persons paid from the public purse will be entitled to gratuity and pension.

It is wrong to make people work without the prospect of gratuity and it has to be corrected. Sir, I am saying that everybody has to understand that all of us in here are entitled to gratuity and pension after a certain period of time. Everyone who works for the Government must get a gratuity and a pension. The only people who do not are members of the Barbados Defence Force. It is wrong and it has to be corrected. Sir, it is a matter of policy which I think is fair and will be executed as a matter of course.

Sir, I also mentioned that we also have on the Table the issue of regrading. The Government has taken a very clear position on this matter. Job evaluation exercises have been undertaken on four previous occasions in the history of Barbados' administration. Regrading exercises have been done four times in the past - in 1948, 1968 and 1975. There was also a regrading or job evaluation exercise undertaken in 1989. The House would have to agree that it is quite proper that at periodic intervals, comprehensive job evaluation exercises must be carried out to correct any distortions in relativities that might in the interval, have crept in between various categories of staff employed by the State. The last exercise, Sir, was carried out in 1989 and one is now properly due.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not only because the last exercise was carried out in 1989, but the fact of the matter, Sir, Deputy Speaker, is that the nature of what purported to be a job evaluation exercise in 1989 was such as to have caused more problems than it solved. A reclassification committee was established under the leadership of the then Head of the Civil Service who was also at the time Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of the Civil Service. He was supported by a few persons who were judged to have the skills and competence to be able to carry out a job evaluation exercise.

Sir, you must know that something as complex as a job evaluation exercise to something as wide as the public service of Barbados should be entered into scientifically, should be the subject of careful study and at the end of the day, should correct distortions in the anomalies existing between various categories of public servants in this country. Perhaps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will have to agree that, given the time the committee functioned, it probably did the best that it could have done. I will also have to agree that given

the resource constraints under which they operated, what purported to have been a regrading, really within a year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, might have been a good thing too. What I do know, Sir, is that that re-classification exercise or what purported to have been a regrading of 1989 has caused more problems than it has solved problems. It never was universally accepted. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has come to be viewed with a great deal of skepticism as well as opposition. Indeed, the failure to gain acceptance for that 1989 job reclassification exercise has in itself triggered subsequent and very severe requests for adjustments on a case by case specific basis to particular posts and to particular groups of posts. 12.25 p.m.

There has been an unsettling sense of injustice surrounding the way in which the 1989 job evaluation exercise was carried out and implemented. Some people ended carrying home a lot of money, but many other people working in similar positions were not made part of the process, including the Police. A large part of the exercise was inspired by a view openly expressed, Sir, that the gap between the top civil servants and those closest to them had become too narrow, and therefore the job evaluation exercise was intended to restore the gap that existed between those at the top and those closest to them and those at the bottom.

There was a situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where persons at the top of the public service of Barbados were the principal beneficiaries of the largesse that passed for the job evaluation exercise in 1989 on the eve of a general election. We are all familiar with the way in which some people boasted that they had to employ security guards to accompany them to the bank because the money was too much for them to carry without the safety net of a protection agency. Men boasted in offices about how well they had done, while their colleagues who pull their weight were left to suck salt. All that was done on the eve of the 1991 election and some \$33 million were paid out. However, rather than correct anomalies, it has done more to exacerbate divisions between all categories of staff in the public service, such that there is a legitimate case that now has to be faced for the carrying out of that comprehensive job evaluation exercise.

Let me put it bluntly, Sir, the strongest argument for a comprehensive regrading of the public service resides in the botched job that was done in 1989. The point I am making is that rather than carrying out a scientific evaluation of the complexity of respective posts: the degree of training required for respective posts; the amount of technology and skills required to do a post relative to the other; a comprehensive evaluation of how certain posts in one section of the public sector are related to similar functions performed in other sections of the public sector; what we had was a very crass and unenlightened exercise in which largesse were

dispensed largely to satisfy the ambitions of those at the top of the public service who felt that the gap between the top and the bottom had become too narrow.

We have an obligation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, now to carry out the kind of comprehensive job classification such as would have been done in 1948, 1968 and 1975. That brings me to my point, Sir, the Government in December last year indicated to the unions representing public officers, that the Government of Barbados intended to start the preparatory work to have such a comprehensive job evaluation exercise carried out.

We go further, Sir, the Government of Barbados has also, given the complexity of the matter; given the fact that we do not feel we have all of the skills in the public service to do the technical work to compare persons across departments and so on; we have received financial assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). We have also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, engaged consultants to assist us in doing the next job evaluation exercise correctly.

The job evaluation exercise, Sir, will now take place in two phases. The first phase will be a diagnostic phase under which a comprehensive examination will take place of where each post in the public service is in relation to every other post and how these posts have changed, for example a public health inspector.

A public health inspector of 1999 is intended to be better trained and must have a certificate in Public Health. He carries out different functions from a public health inspector in 1940. Various posts in the public service obviously are changing in complexity in terms of the training required to do the post and also in terms of the information and other technology associated with the function of the post. As a result, therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there has to be a comprehensive diagnosis of all the posts of the public sector of Barbados.

We have received resources to carry out that first phase, a diagnostic phase and once we are satisfied with the evaluation and diagnosis, we will then move to the development of a framework for implementation of a new regrading of the public servants of Barbados. It is a complex matter, Sir, but it is better that we approach it, recognising the holistic nature of what we are seeking to accomplish. It is better that we approach it fairly, openly and transparently with the needs of all public sectors to have their conditions rectified; rather than approach it in the piecemeal and partial fashion that obtained in 1989, when only part of the public sector, Sir, was regraded and you do not have that ridiculous situation where many public servants feel that they have been savaged by the process in this country.

I want to stress, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Government will not be distracted from the purpose of carrying out a comprehensive regrading and job evaluation exercise in the public service because it is the right thing to do.

Every group in the public service may want to feel that his case is more urgent than any other case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and perhaps they are entitled to the luxury of that opinion. But those of us who have the responsibility for the management of the overall Government sector have, Sir, to see the whole picture and to recognise that it would be a very unfair thing but also a very inefficient and impractical thing for us to treat to the needs of one class of public officer and to ignore the other classes.

Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it would put us back in a worse position than that of 1989, because we already know, Sir, that the 1989 situation has worsened the case of many public officers and if we were to have now, Sir, only a partial regrading that would only make a bad situation worse.

I say to the House therefore, Sir, that the Government is on very good ground when it has determined that we are prepared only to deal with regrading on a comprehensive basis and that we are not now going to pull any one class of public servant out of the queue and say we feel that your case has to be dealt with as being a more urgent case than that of anybody else.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, every trade union has been told that these are the facts. There will be a comprehensive regrading. The recent issue with the police is that although they have been told there will be a comprehensive regrading from which they too will benefit, they are saying that they must be pulled out of the queue and treated as being totally different from any other public servant in Barbados. If we were to agree with the requests of the Police Association we will go back to compounding the foolishness that took place in 1989. In many respects it is wrong. 12.35p.m.

I have said in the House that the regrading exercise must take account of the British experience where in many respects in Britain, various kinds of public officers are classed together as being public officers who have to function under socially undesirable circumstances and the relativity is established among persons in that class. As we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nurses, policemen, firemen and members of the Defence Force have to function under socially undesirable circumstances because while the rest of us have 9-5 jobs, they work weekends and are on call.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the point I am making is this, that the regrading exercise can only be worthwhile if in the end it succeeds in establishing relativity between people who are doing similar jobs; who have to receive similar type of training to do these jobs; who have to keep similarly unsociable hours and who face the same kinds of perils at the workplace. It should be obvious to anybody that the circumstances of the Defence Force are not dissimilar from those of the Police. It has to be true. The members of the Defence Force and the Police go on the same joint patrols. The members of the Defence Force face the same threats from the drug barons as the Police. It is not that Government is trying to disadvantage the Police. We are being faithful to a precept that says, let us do it well and let us do it correctly.

Therefore, we have just preselected the consultants who will allow us to complete this job evaluation exercise in a comprehensive way and I hope that it could be completed within two years. For the purposes of clarity of public policy, I just want to say that a job evaluation exercise is not the same thing as a wage increase, although it may lead to wage increases for various categories of public servants. I do not anticipate that any will be made worst off. I just want to say, that the regrading exercise will be effective, not at some time in the past, but will become effective as of the date when the reclassification exercise has been concluded. I am not delaying it all. I stress the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because a pattern has been developing in Barbados where job evaluation exercises have been made retroactive. If a man's job is reclassified, effectively he enters a new relationship with his employer as of that day. I stress the point, because I do not want any misunderstanding.

The Government is telling the unions we will have a comprehensive reclassification but the regraded new posts will become effective as of the date when the agreement is reached. I would like to see this precept apply not only in the public sector but in the private sector as well. At the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) there was effectively a situation where job reclassification and retroactive pay was one and the same thing. It makes sense for it to become effective as of some specific date once agreement has been reached and there should be no dispute on that particular matter.

Mr. Speaker, the Government anticipates that over the course of the next few months that its wage bill will be increased by almost \$100 million arising from the agreements that we have already put in place. It is our expectation that the incremental cost to Government - and incremental cost has a meaning - will be \$29 million in the first year followed by an additional \$18.8 million in the second year, this will total some \$47 million. That is the cost of the wage increase part of this matter.

We anticipate, as I said, repaying the eight per cent in a number of tranches. Between this financial year and the next, the Government expects to pay out at least \$45 million of the \$60 million repayable to the public servants. The public servants can expect to get an additional \$45 million in income over the course of the next 18 months.

We also anticipate, that there will be an increase in pensions payable to Government pensioners. On that point, Sir, what is before the House is merely a cost of living allowance. The House has already been told that the Government has secured assistance in carrying out a comprehensive study to change the way in which Government pensioners are paid. The cost to Government of the payment of Government pensioners has increased from about \$40 million a few years ago to well over \$80 million today. This is one of the fastest growing areas of public expenditure, but as you are aware, it is on a pay-as-you-go basis rather than on a funded basis. Therefore, Government has commissioned a study which we hope shortly to have the recommendations from, to put more security into Government's funding for its pensioners. As I say, Sir, it is now on a pay-as-you-go basis but it is better to have a funded pension arrangement. We therefore, want to put that on a secured basis. This may well be the last time that the House will be asked to grant a cost of living allowance to Government pensioners.

We are proposing, as part of the general settlement of the public service, to grant a 6% increase to Government pensioners effective from April 1, and that is to be added in. We anticipate, as well, to shortly conclude arrangements for improved allowances and we want to bring them in by the April 1, 2000. As I said, the allowances paid to the public servants which is separate from their wages now constitutes \$23 million. You would understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that for example a 5% increase in those allowances could take another million dollars or more from the Treasury. What has so far been agreed to with the unions will see an increase in the cost of Government's expenditure by almost \$100 million between the end of this financial year and the end of the next financial year.

I am sure that the House will agree that it cannot be unreasonable for the Government to be contemplating paying out almost \$100 million in benefits to the public servants of Barbados at this time. It is in that context and for that reason that the Government had no difficulty in being appreciative of the reasonableness of the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW) because they saw the whole picture. It is for that reason that I want to urge the House to see this in its broadest context and to agree that what we are here doing is fair and reasonable. 12.45p.m.

Sir, we have, in our financial planning, made arrangements to be able to bring this wage settlement to account without putting our fiscal position in jeopardy. We have been carefully managing Government expenditure. I do not have the exact figures but I will be giving them to the House perhaps some time during the course of the day. We will be able this financial year to meet this wage settlement and achieve the objective of keeping the fiscal deficit perhaps under 2Wfo of the GDP.

I want to speak to that point, Sir, because one of the reasons why I am told that the CTUSAB was not in a position to settle with the Government was because certain elements of CTUSAB had held out that the Government should settle for something that would cause our deficit to rise perhaps as high as 6%. A deficit of 6% of the GDP provides the basis upon which the Democratic Labour Party in the early 1990s had to seek accommodation with the International Monetary Fund. I am not taking this country back to that dismal state.

I have said that a deficit of 2*/2% is what we should aim at. There are circumstances sometimes when it could be allowed to be lower, sometimes it could be allowed to be higher, but that depends upon the availability of financing to support a deficit that does not put the Government of Barbados in a situation where it has to depend very heavily on Central Bank financing.

The point I am making is this, Sir, that this wage settlement is being made at a time when there is already great consumption taking place in Barbados. It is taking place at a time when there might even be evidence of excess demand in Barbados represented in the fact that there has been a build-up in credit for personal purposes and in some respects a draw down of deposits by the private individuals to pay for their consumption in the marketplace.

We have to be careful, therefore, of the rate at which we add to domestic purchasing power in circumstances where there is already evidence of excess demand in the Barbados economy. There is an additional factor that the Government's fiscal position is stable although I must say there has been a substantial build-up in arrears in the VAT as well as the excise tax on energy products that is unconscionable, also, a build-up in arrears in the land tax despite the granting of amnesties.

We are not going to have two Barbadoses, one in which people pay their taxes and the next in which people do not pay their taxes. People will have to pay their taxes.

I am satisfied, Sir, that given the amount of arrears owed that the Government can fully meet all its obligations without having to raise any tax from anybody if people

would just pay their taxes. That is fair. So I am not at all going to contemplate, and I want to say this for the House, I am not going to agree to raise any taxes to fix the roads, or to do the things we know we have to do, but if people would just pay their taxes, we would have enough revenue to do what we have to do. If people with arrears on the land tax have been given three amnesties and up to December they have not settled, let them pay. We will use those proceeds to pay the public servants, fix the roads and do what we have to do without increasing the rates. Over \$150 million in taxes are owed to Government through land tax, the VAT and excise tax on energy products.

Sir, I might even be able to afford the airport for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy if I got in the \$ 150 million. I would be able to give him not only the house spots in St. Lucy but also the \$60 million airport he wants.

The point I am making, Sir, is simply this. There is a situation of tight liquidity in the banking sector of Barbados at this time because of the strong private sector activity taking place in the country such that the most recent issues of Government treasury bills have been undersubscribed. We have not been in a position where we can look to the domestic market to meet increased obligations by the State. There is tight liquidity in the banking sector. We cannot afford to pay this now from the Capital Head and raising the Ways and Means any further or from raising taxes. The Government will collect the revenue owed and pay for this without disadvantaging the Barbadian public by raising taxes to pay for it. I think the House will agree that in circumstances where there are arrears that the tax rate can suffice Government's obligations without our having to raise the tax rate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am satisfied that we can meet these demands on the Treasury for \$100 million over the course of the next 18 months without putting Barbados in an unsustainable financial position. May I also say that in the final analysis the wage settlement we are asking the House to agree to bears a relationship to what is being settled upon in most of the private sector.

As you know, Sir, the private sector looks to Government for signals. If the wage increase was the only part of the wage settlement then the 1-1 comparison between the Government and the private sector would suffice but, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy knows, and I have been clear to point out, you have four types of settlements and it is only when you put the whole picture together that you will be able to compare what we are seeking to accomplish in the public sector this year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in all respects, the Government has been assiduous in trying to make sure that we could have brought to this House a wage settlement that is fair and

reasonable. We are attending to those other matters that concern the welfare of the public sector. We are satisfied that a framework for further consultation is in place that will allow us to bring those matters to a happy conclusion.

May I say, Sir, that although, and I want to stress this point, CTUSAB has not found it possible to settle with the Government, there is no sense of rancour between CTUSAB and the Government. I am happy to report to the House that discussions on all other aspects of the package that concern the Government and CTUSAB as well as other trade unions are continuing. I hope and expect that this matter is not going to distort the harmonious industrial relations that Barbados needs to ensure its competitiveness.

I end, Sir, as I began. I would have wished that I would have been able to say to Parliament that what we are asking the House to approve enjoys the full concurrence of all the unions. It has not, Sir. I am satisfied that what is before Parliament is fair and reasonable to the public servants whom it must suffice.

It is designed to take account eventually and in the final analysis of the economic and social circumstances of Barbados. It is entirely consistent with the precepts and policies outlined in the social contract. It is on those higher grounds, Sir, and from the perspective of its potential beneficial impact on a society in general that I commend this Resolution to Parliament and do now beg that this Resolution do now pass.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is now 1 o'clock. I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended for lunch until 2.15 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 12.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on this Order to give effect to the Government's

decision to pay the public officers in Barbados and related publicly paid employees an increase of 4% in the first year effective from April 1, 1999 and an additional increase of 2.5% in the second year effective from April 1, 2000.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the outset, I must say that not only for the sake of consistency but based on arguments that had been previously adduced in here in other debates we on this Side would have great difficulty supporting this particular matter. I need to say so up front because I believe that most of the arguments that have been advanced in this debate would have been advanced in 1996 sometime in January when the Government was dealing with the previous revision of salaries.

At that time in debating that particular Resolution -1 want to quote from page 2476 of Hansard during that debate -1 made the point:

"... the people of Barbados at the end of the day, and not what I say in this debate or what the views exclusively of the Democratic Labour Party may be, have to be the ultimate judges of the efficacy, the decency and the integrity of the actions of politicians in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is not an exercise in see-sawing. I assume that when the Barbados Labour Party was elected in 1994 it viewed the perspective of elections as what the Americans would call a paradigm shift in Barbados. I think that the fact that there has been little public reaction to the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Peter on his proposals here today is not something that he should take comfort from. Sometimes when people are totally dejected they are taken by surprise and are flabbergasted and their initial reaction is simply to accept whatever decision is taken."

The point I want to make, Sir, is what is not relevant in this debate today is what the Democratic Labour Party said about the eight per cent nor the IMF programme nor any of that. The people spoke to that issue five years ago and they spoke resoundingly again ten months ago. Therefore with respect to the views of the Honourable Member for St. John or the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in previous debates, except for the need to have vibrant criticism and debate in this country and to defend the rights of members and persons with opposing views to have their say, the Prime Minister is free to ignore everything that we say in this debate and so are Members on the Other Side if they so desire.

It is not important what we say but what is important is how the workers of Barbados feel about this. I believe, Sir, that it is our responsibility to take up the concerns of the workers of Barbados and put those concerns at the forefront of our debate because it is the Barbados Labour Party that will have to answer to the workers of this country at the end of the day.

Let us look at the sophisticated arguments that would have been adduced in here today and then contrast them with 1996. To show you, Sir, why it would be entirely wrong for the Opposition to give support to the passage of these Resolutions.

We want the public servants to get their salary increases. Let us have no fear about that. We also expect them to get other things in the process and I will deal with that a bit later. In 1996, the Barbados-Labour Party came to the House and at that time, as I said, we were debating a salaries revision and the Prime Minister said in that debate at page 2474:

"I am saying that the history of wage settlements in this country is replete with instances in which Parliament has been, in fact, called upon to exercise the statutory requirements that we must amend these things by Order without full agreement with all of the unions, because you had these instances in multi-union situations where some unions have agreed and others have not. But, Sir, it comes down to a question of judgment. I would not expect that a Government will go because one small union has agreed to a wage increase to say that is the end of the process. What we have in this instance, Mr. Speaker, is the case where all but one have agreed in principle except the NUPW which represents 43 per cent of public servants. All of the others representing 57 per cent of the public servants..."

So at the end of the day what you had was a situation in this debate where having said that the other unions represented 57% last time and you could not go along with NUPW because they only represented 43% on this occasion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what you are saying is that we have the others representing 57% and the NUPW representing only 43% but yet the position of the NUPW should prevail.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke in this particular debate on behalf of the Government. I am not doing this to be invidious but merely to explain what the Government's position was then.

The Honourable Member said then:

"...I believe, in good faith and in the interest of the majority of the public servants of this country that the Government had to take a decision to come here to legislate in the context where full agreement had not been reached with the NUPW."

She went on to say:

"I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Government has taken that decision on the basis of what would otherwise be known as a simple majority. The majority

of the workers represented are represented by other unions M1 of whom have accepted the proposals outlined by Government, to be more specific, that 57 per cent of the workers represented by other unions have accepted the proposals as opposed to 43 per cent represented by the NUPW. That, Sir, was done on the basis of a simple majority. What makes this so interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that the same NUPW, 2 weeks ago, said to this country that they did not have unanimous support for industrial action against the Government on this same wages issue and they had taken the decision in respect of what they dubbed as guerilla tactics on the basis of a simple majority, not having unanimous support within its council. But now, Sir, we will hear from the Opposition in this country that the Government cannot take a decision on the basis of the same simple majority; that 57 per cent of the workers represented by other unions have Agreed to the proposals and the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that the rules must be the same, both for Government and for the NUPW, in terms of exercising its judgment and discretion as to where to go from here on."

So the Government put its position. On that occasion they represented 57 per cent so we went with the simple majority. On this occasion you do not have the agreement of the simple majority. You have the agreement of a union which represents exclusively public sector workers but does not represent the majority of them. We had to go against it even though it was alleged that the other unions represented the majority. We would find great difficulty today supporting a situation in which, it is even worse where agreement with one union, which represents 43% of the workers is attained, and yet the others have not agreed. We can only do that based on the logic of the Honourable Member for St. Peter. There can be no other basis. I believe that he would wish to be logical. 2.20 p.m.

He said that we had agreement with one union and that union represents 43% of the workers. He said that CTUSAB has not agreed. I believe under the social partnership that you should have at least some broad agreement amongst the majority of unions. He said the level of wages was not agreed by the other unions. He also said that the return of the eight per cent was not included nor allowances in respect of public workers which are going to be adjusted in due course.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the position of the Government. The Honourable Member for St. Peter, once again in this debate, gets up and lashes out at certain individual groups of workers in this country either for action which he says are not conducive to good labour relationships or which would create such a disparity between them and other workers in the country that the situation would be untenable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1996 we made the point then and have to reiterate it now that the Government had no compunction, even though there was in place a social partnership and a protocol evidencing that social partnership, in taking certain categories of workers in Barbados and awarding them substantially increased remuneration packages. For example, the three top officers at the Barbados Tourism Authority. There were other statutory corporations in Barbados and other persons paid within entities in which Government has a control in which they were singled out for benefits which do not apply across the rest of the public sector in Barbados. What was the rationale for that? The private sector leader said that it was a job evaluation exercise and that it was justified. The unions accepted that it was the process of a job evaluation exercise because they have representatives on the board of the statutory entities which singled out these groups of individuals for special payment.

Now, we are saying on this Side - not opportunistically but because we sincerely believe it - that there are certain categories of workers in Barbados whose situation is absurd, both in terms of our national goals and also in terms of fairness and social justice, that was lofty spoken about yesterday on Independence Day and which I read about, in various messages delivered by various prominent people in Barbados. Our argument is that those groups needed to have special and unique attention paid to their plight.

All of a sudden in 1999, we are hearing that if special categories of workers are created and are given additional benefits that it will create disharmony. That the police should be happy with their lot because the Barbados Defence Force does not have the same benefits as the police. Nobody is arguing about the Police and the Barbados Defence Force - least of all Members of the Opposition. If Members on that Side as Members of Cabinet are fighting for territory to determine who is more important, whether it is the Police or the Barbados Defence Force or who should have pensions and who should not, there is a simple solution to that. Sit down and introduce those measures in respect of those categories of workers who are most disadvantaged, whether it is the BDF, the nurses, the teachers or the police so that they get benefits commensurate with the sacrifice they make and the contribution to our national development goals. That is all we are saying. Therefore, I have to oppose any argument in here which seeks to give the impression that all the Opposition is doing is opportunistically raising a flag for the police, the teachers and the nurses while there are other categories of workers who are being left behind like the members of the Barbados Defence Force. I would like the Barbados Defence Force members to get their pensions too and get them now.

Yesterday morning as I was going into a part of the Barbados Defence Force, I met a young man who said he has

been in there for fourteen years and he is going to stick around because he heard pensions are coming. He does not want to leave having put in fourteen years service. I agreed with him. He may want to leave because he has reached the end of his tenure in terms of being in a disciplined force and since it takes a certain psychological preparation to enter and remain in a disciplined force.

He is saying that he wants to stick around for his pension. We are saying that it is quite worthy because the kind of service that they have rendered to society means that they should benefit. You cannot have a situation where there is a disciplined force and the man at the top of that disciplined force is entitled to two salaries, two pensions and all kinds of benefits, yet the men at the bottom are not entitled to it. When one checks the way in which the office of Chief of Staff of the Barbados Defence Force was established and then compare the benefits of that office to everything else in the Barbados Defence Force, one will see why the soldiers are justified in being disgruntled. That is not the case in the Police Force. That does not justify a situation where one of the most critical areas of public policy to be executed is in the hands of 1 200 men who are clearly badly disadvantaged.

Again, I want to stress this to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. Only yesterday I was at Gall Hill in St. John talking to some basketballers. We were talking about the fact that lights had been put up on the hard courts in St. John now but yet the participation in basketball is declining. They made the point to me that that programme began with the resident police officer. He was the one who came and said, let us get this court resurfaced and we made an application to the National Sports Council back in the 1980s. He started the volleyball there and the basketball and all of the other activities that were going on. They said that one of the reasons why people do not go out there is because of the incident that took place a few months ago when a youngster got stabbed and that they wished they had an officer back in the community. Not to lock up people, not to walk around with a gun but to earn the kind of respect that would make people feel comfortable when they come out and participate in those activities. By the way, we had a team from Blenheim in St. Michael East that came to play netball. They did beat the team from St. John and they have asked me to mention that to the parliamentary representative for the constituency.

The point is that it was a great joy to see them out there and in asking them, it was also good to hear what they felt about the concept of community policing. It is an endorsement. The police do not have to feel that everybody in this community is against them, hates them or have something against them. The Government itself, to my mind, needs to exercise judgement, as it said it did in 1996, to pull out those individuals and groups in the public service whose responsibilities have changed over time and who, in the

pursuit of national development may play a lesser or greater role, as the case may be, and reward them appropriately. Not to give them significant advantages over others but appropriate rewards for the kind of work that they have been doing. Therefore, I am disappointed again to come here another week without seeing proposals on the Table to improve certain categories of workers in this country.

I do not think that it is a dangerous scenario for you to single out certain groups which have made their contributions. We are not going to let anybody believe that we are creating a situation of setting up the police against all other public officers in Barbados, because that is not what is being attempted in this process. 2.30 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, then the Honourable Member for St. Peter went into a long presentation which excited a few Members on that Side. But it was not new, exactly that same debate took place on February 23, 1996 with exactly those allegations and documents which the Honourable Member for St. Peter read, were referred to in a debate on Tuesday, January 23, 1996 and Friday, February 23, 1996. He read from Minutes of the Cabinet meeting. He said he was going to release the documents in due course. He has read them at public meetings. You cannot reprobate and approbate at the same time.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You cannot accuse the Democratic Labour Party of discussing things with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which never came to fruition at the end of the day, because of the existence of the social partnership or because the political directorate had better sense than to implement them. While at the same time seeking to give the impression that the Democratic Labour Party so badly managed the economy that it was not able to draw down the last set of money from the IMF.

The economic policies in Barbados have not changed since 1992/1993. The broad basis of policies remain the same and there is nobody who would question that. One principle plank of those policies was in fact the social partnership. The social partnership discussions are what led to us not increasing the National Housing Corporation (NHC) rents. That was no secret. How could it have been a secret if the Honourable Member referred to my Budget in which I spoke about it in March 1994. It could not have been a secret if the source he is using was a public presentation before the television cameras in Barbados and we said what our position was. That statement made in that Budget was simply to reinforce that the IMF knew what our position was, what we would do and what we would not do. They were not prepared to send a mission to Barbados unless we did certain

things and the social partnership agreed collectively that we would not do them, so things came to an end.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the issue of the repayment of the eight per cent, even if all of that is ignored and the Honourable Member for St. Peter wishes to allege that up to leaving office in 1994 the Democratic Labour Party did not intend to repay the public officers, he still has to come to grips with the fact that it was only after the Democratic Labour Party said in either 1995 or 1996 that we felt the public officers will be repaid, that a pledge by the Barbados Labour Party was made to repay them.

In fact the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that we should never be calling on him to repay them, because, "you took the money, you pay it back." That was said on the Floor of this House, and we persisted and in the last wages settlement, January 1996, I put out the Democratic Labour Party position quite clearly then, at page 2176 and I quote.

"I want to say this, that when the public officers in 1991, October took a cut in their wages that cut was imposed on the basis, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the first beneficiaries of the fruits of the stabilization of the adjustment programme would have to be the public officers."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was referring to the Speaker then. He took an 8% pay cut too. You had better check to see where he was working then. I went on to say.

"They took a cut, but who should benefit first? If you want to carry out the new public sector reform programme in which you announce is a policy that people at the top should be paid five times what the next person in line is to get, that is something that you have to sell to the public of Barbados."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it must be inconceivable in the good society, as the Honourable Member of St. George South would put it, that the people who make the sacrifice do not get any benefit. You know there is nobody in Barbados today, who can tell me what the public officers will be getting, but we know what the President of the BTA and his two juniors will be getting. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is within days of a protocol which he has signed.

Asides

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You can go on from there, because from there we made a specific pledge carried in the Manifesto and made our position clear on the pay back. I believe the document that the Honourable Member for St. Peter read, makes it clear that the process of trying to get a bond in place and the negotiations for it being a loan were

not being pursued anymore. The processes for that were not being pursued for the simple reason that no agreement had been reached and the Government had a timed deadline to get an agreement signed with the IMF. But I do not wish to spend all the time on that because I believe that that matter has been debated time and time again and if the Prime Minister gets some joy out of repeating it five years after he has had a mandate to put right, wrong things, including the repayment of the eight per cent which he promised faithfully night after night on political platforms and elsewhere in Barbados, leading up to the election, then that would be his problem. He does not have to answer to the Democratic Labour Party on that because we are not asking for a pay back for ourselves. The pay back is for the workers of Barbados, particularly those in the public sector who made the greatest sacrifice in this country during the time of economic difficulties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you look broadly at what is happening in the labour relations in Barbados today, even with a social compact or social contract in place, I do not know what we are calling it now, we are going to end this century, if we are not careful, without having any provision made for minimal wages across all sectors in this country. With workers in some industries in this country earning as low as \$90.00 a week, which is almost half the amount that had been determined to be the poverty line in Barbados. We are almost going to end this century with workers in some industries earning that amount. We are going to end this century without unfair dismissal legislation and occupation health and safety legislation being on the Statute Books in this country, despite the fact that if you look at the claims made to National Insurance Department in this country for work place injuries, it is staggering the percentage increase of claims between the mid 1980s and 1999.

I urge the Honourable Member on that Side who is responsible for national insurance to take a look at the statistics and recognise the extent to which it is almost reaching crisis proportion. The most recent figures up from about 2 000 to 3 000 claims in the 1980s have gone as high as 8 000 claims in relation to work place injuries and that must tell us that something needs to be done to put appropriate legislation in place and to have it effectively policed.

We are also going to end this century in a situation that even though we have a social partnership on paper, we would have ended this century, two months short of December 31, with the Barbados Labour Party at its own Annual Conference doubting the efficacy of that social partnership, with the Prime Minister basically saying that it is ridiculous that despite a social contract being in place that you have labour unrest almost every day in our country, whether it is work stoppages, strikes or whatever.

Another speaker at the Conference said that if we are not careful the politics of inclusion, which would include the role of the social partnership is going to evolve very quickly into the politics of illusion. We are about to close the century having had a Government in power since September 6, 1994 which has not put in place a major piece of labour legislation to protect the right of workers against unscrupulous employers and against exploitation. 2.40 p.m.

There is no minimal wage legislation despite the fact that all three political parties in this country agreed in 1996 that we need to ensure that persons who are disadvantaged by the payment of sub-standard wages would have the protection of the law. Hence you have a situation of significant labour unrest, exploitation of workers by non-Barbadians and by some Barbadian businesses. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the legacy that we will leave to the next generation of Barbadians born after January 1, 2000. That is a sad indictment on this generation of Barbadians that the advances that this country would have made in terms of labour between 1937 and as far as 1986 and except for the period when we had the pay cut and other significant hardships which would have been imposed unavoidably on workers, that we have made no major advances in terms of new legislation to create an environment free of exploitation and on which workers do not feel unfairly disadvantaged.

The reason why it is so important, is that we are moving into an era of globalisation and new trading arrangements in which more and more you are going to find that workers are not going to be formally attached to any single employer; they will be employed from pools of individuals with similar skills; employed to undertake specific tasks and released when the task is over. In some cases, nobody will be paying contributions to the National Insurance Scheme for them and no one will be able to determine who their employer is in the broad definition of the legislation for severance payment purposes; even the courts will have great difficulties in determining their status.

We need to be extremely wary that those practices which have afflicted other nations which do not necessarily have the same economic make up or the same social structure that we have in Barbados are not recreated here in our country simply because we folded our arms and ignored the threats that were on the horizon, both locally, regionally and internationally. Therefore, a lot of those industries will be moving out of Barbados because the wage structure or employment cost in other countries may be lower than in our country and the strength of the trade union movement may have declined in those other countries by comparison to Barbados and because those other countries may not have the kind of vision which our leaders would have had in the period leading up to the end of this century.

I believe that if it is true that we have a social partnership in Barbados then it has to work to the advantage of everyone. It cannot be a situation where the only people who make a sacrifice in the process are the workers. At the end of the day, the only people who stand to benefit are the employers because of such a vaguely worded social partnership document that you cannot get your teeth into or pinpoint any specific obligation that they have to the country. Nobody has set any employment targets for them. Nobody has set any economic democracy targets for them. Nobody has said that the Board rule must change in this way or that more companies must be listed on the Stock Exchange*or that there is going to be some relationship between incentives and benefits that you received and the number of people that you employ. None of that forms the core of the social partnership but the workers know that the social partnership can have the net effect of broadly determining the level of wages in specific terms - dollars and cents - that this economy can bear over two to three years or for a longer period of time but there are no specific targets set for the private sector.

Government, from time to time does as it likes. They lay off workers and adopt a position in which ones ability to climb the ladder in the public service has nothing to do with ones qualifications but has a lot to do with favouritism throughout the system. There should be specific ways in which a social partnership and social contract can unravel that. One of the reason why it does not do it is because by and large it is symbolic. We, in the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) are partly to blame for that because, of course, our interpretation of the private sector in 1992, for the purpose of what we wanted it to do only included the big four organisations, and the person whom they did not elect democratically. That person apparently was just thrown up in the process as the head of the private sector.

The private sector, therefore, in trying to gain some credibility, has been saying, that it is their belief- and I want to quote from a speech made by Sir John Stanley Goddard. I can make it a document of the House but I believe that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East would have a copy in his file because both he and I were given copies at the same time. This is a speech delivered to the Employers Confederation - that Government was too big and cumbersome. The social partnership apparently had as part of its objective, in his view, of cutting down the size of Government. Then there was a call for the trade unions to redefine their roles. This is what they said about the private sector.

"Much more will be expected of the private sector in the future in terms of earning foreign exchange, creating jobs, and contributing toward national development. This sector must not be perceived as only the public companies whose shares are traded on the Securities Exchange nor restricted to members of the

Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association, the Hotel Association, the Agricultural Society and the Employers Confederation. While these organisations play an important role and have recently tried to improve their effectiveness under the umbrella of the Barbados Private Sector Agency, the private sector must see itself as including all those small businesses and individuals who are involved in commercial activities in the various sectors outside Government."

This speech was delivered on March 22, 1995 and March 22, 2000 will come and pass, I am almost certain, and nothing would have been done in Barbados to ensure that the definition of the private sector within the social partnership includes at the top levels of the discussions somebody who is elected democratically by the private sector; as well as some of the representatives of the other organisations which have emerged as a result of the economic policies of successive Governments in this country to represent other interest groups in our country, so that is where we would have gone.

Therefore, if you are not careful, the social partnership will just be a lot of posing. I am using a word which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East likes to use, not about me but about other politicians I believe and there are not many on this Side. Once I see the word "politicians" I know it has to go beyond the two on this Side - politicians who pose. So the social partnership ends up being a scenario with men sitting around a table posing. Men going to conferences and saying what saved Barbados was this social partnership and their deep commitment. Men giving the impression that the private sector created jobs as a result of the social partnership and that the foreign exchange that we are not earning in Barbados today has nothing to do with the private sector. It is the Government or the workers who are causing people not to be here and the workers themselves have made no sacrifices. At the end of the day the benefits of the social partnership to the workers have been the greatest and Government has presided over these new social arrangements to create a good society. Yet every day workers are coming off the job, sick-outs, strikes and unrest in the industrial sector. Government institutions are being closed down on a daily basis and the representatives of those groups are not having any say at all. 2.50 p.m.

The major foreign exchange earning sectors of the economy are not earning foreign exchange and yet the social partnership is confusing itself, not about the next phase of restructuring of the Barbados economy but about trying to preserve benefits that the private sector has "earned" down through the years from the political class and from the labour movement in this country. Then people will tell me that Barbados is governed and we are supposed to grow. I agree

with the social partnership. I believe it can be an effective tool in national development but not just as an incomes policy.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East, if he speaks in this debate, can get up and say why the original Protocol moved away from only being an incomes policy. He can also say why there were other positions taken in that Protocol which had they been followed through to their logical conclusion would have seen a true and effective social partnership in this country which, to my mind, could have sustained economic growth in those foreign exchange earning sectors; could have made the workers in Barbados feel they were truly participating in a democratic environment where they were empowered to be truly part of the enterprises in which they worked and in which Government would earn eternal respect, not the Government of the day, but the concept of Government for protecting the rights of the disadvantaged and others. Instead of that, things are being done in a piece-meal manner.

You identify poverty and the solution is not to introduce minimal wage legislation. You gave people \$350 one year and \$500 last year. We now have to wait to see what they are going to get this year instead of us agreeing this is not the way to fight this problem. There is a way and self respect demands that anybody in this country who is earning less than \$90 a week or \$90 a week in industries in this country is functioning in substandard conditions. We have a commitment to introduce minimum wage policy, not handouts, so that the working poor in this country is raised to a level of subsistence in which they can feel comfortable. We do not have that. What we have is a solution that does not offend the private sector.

The unions do not really have much to say about it. It does not offend them because they do not have any obligations. Minimal wage does not affect them because at the end of the day the Government has the responsibility to fork out \$350 and \$500 with people licking down your branch office door in January because they work for less than \$3 000 a year and fighting you to prove they work for less than \$3 000 a year so they could benefit from a handout from Government. This is nonsense.

If we go into the next century treating people in this way, I can tell you it will have a backlash just as the social partnership itself is having a backlash with all of the work stoppages, the strikes and the labour unrest which the Prime Minister said at his Annual Conference is ridiculous.

It is ridiculous but there is a reason for it. The Democratic Labour Party said there would be a backlash from the way in which not only these wages negotiations are conducted but the way in which the social partnership in Barbados is being conducted because it is not inclusive. It is

not representative. It is not aiming at social justice. All three of the parties are guilty to one extent or another of compromising what is their principal role and responsibilities.

Government is not an equal partner at a meeting of any social partnership. Government is an employer, but it also has an overriding role in this country to protect those who are most vulnerable whose cause and concern may never have come to the table because they do not fall either under the private sector nor do they fall under labour. There are many people like that in this country for example, the elderly; the people in Glendairy Prison because they have to come back into this society too at some point, some of them or the majority of them; the youth on the block; the unemployed; the disabled; and you just put a clause in a protocol and then everybody is rushing around at meetings giving the impression that this country is being governed by new social relations which are not apparent to the naked eye. In fact, some of the social relations we are seeing are carrying us back to the days when people were handing out soup, old shoes and so on with people lining up and this is something we have to look at.

We will support the Government in any attempts it makes to raise the standard of living across the board by implementing policies that aim at social justice but where those policies are aiming at creating mendicancy, or creating a situation where categories of Barbadians have basically to line up for rewards in this country, then we are going to have problems.

We will support Government in any of its attempts to single out disadvantaged groups of workers, even if it is a small category, but we cannot support a government which can come in here and say that it is okay to single out the three top people at the BTA but it is wrong to single out the police, and that it is dangerous to single out one category of worker for benefits while not dealing across the board.

The disparity in wages between the top people at the BTA, who apparently before that were being paid peanuts, and the rest of the public service and the top managers in the public service is so dramatic and unbelievable as to create in itself a dangerous precedent but one which the Government was ready, willing and able to embrace just three years ago and to get in this Chamber and defend it to the hilt. When the Democratic Labour Party, the Police Association, the Registered Nurses' Association, the BUT and other individual unions and groups of workers in Barbados make out a case for improved conditions of service in a situation where you have a social partnership, the Government can come in here and tell us that one union representing 43% of the workers on this occasion has agreed and that we are sorry the rest have not agreed but it is our judgment that we should pay. Just two years ago it was a different story. The other

unions represented the majority, the one that represented 43% was trying to rape the Treasury, because those words were used, by asking for benefits which Barbados could ill afford to pay.

In 1999 you have the reverse situation. All of a sudden people would expect in the spirit of inclusion - I do not even know what you would call it - that the Democratic Labour Party would suddenly change its colours and all of a sudden we are to give the Barbados Labour Party Government the opportunity to pull wool over the eyes of the people again. We will not be supporting it.

On the last occasion I was one of those who did not support the Resolution. I have to call on the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East to remain consistent on this one. He voted no then, too. The Leader of the third party voted no - he was then R. C. Haynes. D. St. E. Kellman, H. F. Lashley, L. A. Weekes, J. O. Tudor, L. E. Sandiford and B. M. Taft. I believe I was sick on that day. I had to go back home because I was very ill. Let me correct the record. I did not vote then but I am voting no today on the basis of the Government's own argument that in 1996 it had a majority of the public servants. 3.00 p.m.

On this occasion, it does not. Therefore, if you are going to follow that argument to its logical conclusion we will have no basis whatsoever, apart from the other reasons that I have mentioned, to support this particular measure. I believe that the country needs to know how productivity in the public service is being measured. We need to know when, as I heard the Member for St. Joseph ask, is the eight per cent going to be repaid. I remind the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter that commitments were made and if the economy is as sound as he suggests, even though there is some temporary demand or situation which he can control quite easily, it should not create a major problem overall for the Barbados economy if the public servants are given their due.

We were not told that in January. Even if the foreign exchange sectors were not growing then, we have not finished the calendar year and the fiscal year started in March. Nothing traumatic happened between January 20 and March 31 but all of a sudden we are hearing as soon as wage negotiations come up that the problems in the economy of demand and so on mean that you have to exercise restraint, when in January we were told that this Government is going to take this country to the highest level of prosperity ever; that the new republic would be a social and economic design in which no one is left behind in this country.

I would have assumed that would be the basis on which the Government would have come today to present this

particular wages package to the public officers and to this Parliament. Regrettably, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not the case. It would disappoint both you and me but it is not the case. Therefore those who said that they were following a different model; that they would always come straight with the public and they would never sacrifice or carry out electoral works; when I look at what is happening with the National Housing Corporation nobody can convince me that is not electoral works. When the public finds out too they will know the extent to which the electoral works were carried out in Barbados.

I believe that if you were to compare the figures in relation to the National Housing Corporation, which will come to light soon, against the cost of this salary revision you will then realise where a lot of money in the Barbados economy dissipated during the past two years.

It is not only the National Housing Corporation. Do not fool yourself! There is going to be other information, whether it is from the Rural and Urban Development Commissions or from the money disbursed out of the Public Enterprise Investment Funds into other funds. All of those transactions which do not always reflect themselves directly in the Estimates in terms of the specific items on which they are spent, would have to come to light and the public will have a chance to see whether any electoral works were carried out in the usual five-year cycle. I believe that part of it is coming today. Later on we are coming to debate a Resolution for the Transport Board and I do not wish to anticipate the House so I will not do that. However, there will be other similar scenarios coming up to close holes and gaps in relation to Government's commitment made particularly in the period leading up to the election and after the election in all of the 'sloganeering' of the period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, today is a sad day because we are going to end this Century with no Labour legislation having been passed in the past five years. None for unfair dismissal, none for a minimum wage, none for health and occupational safety. We are going to end this Century in a situation where labour unrest is taking place almost every day in Barbados and we are going to end this Century in a situation where we do not have a true social partnership. That is a very sad state of affairs for Barbados.

On the basis of the Resolution as presented Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Opposition will not be able to support it today.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to say from the outset that I will not support this Resolution and I will be honest and frank up front. In this country it appears as though there are only three people operating; one in the public sector, one in the private sector and the Prime Minister.

It appears to me that once they decide on something that everybody else must be happy and that is the general feeling across Barbados. I want to say that the trade union movement has failed this country in the last five years. I will tell you why. I see what is going on in Barbados like a triangle. On one side you have the private sector making a lot of money. On the other side you have the Government raking in a lot of money but, lo and behold, Sir, at the bottom of the triangle, you cannot get the workers to connect to the triangle to get some of the money.

I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you cannot have a situation where the private sector is happy because their directors and shareholders are happy because they are getting their dividends. On the Government side, the Government is happy because it is raking in taxes. But what is happening to the workers? The workers have to fight and beg every day.

Today what was most hurtful was to hear the Prime Minister agreeing with the leader of the National Union of Public Workers for putting the productivity bonus onto the increase. Can you imagine they go and agree to a 6.5%, 6% for normal wages and 0.5%, that a national union leader could tell the Prime Minister to tack on as productivity bonus because it is so small that if you pay it out you would not be able to see it?

I am calling on the public servants today to tell the National Union of Public Workers that they cannot be representing their interests when they are not manly enough to let people see what they would have received if they had the productivity bonus showing on their cheques.

I am telling the civil servants that they have been deprived of their right to get a proper productivity bonus for the simple reason that the 0.5% means nothing. They were too ashamed to pay them and they tacked it on to the wage increase. If they were to bring the productivity bonus to the civil servants many of them would not accept those cheques. They would leave them where they came from. There were too shame to pay you so they tacked it on to the increase that you are getting. I am challenging the unions... 3.10p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not swiping. If they were to bring the productivity bonus to the civil servants, many of them would not accept those cheques, they would leave them where they came from so they had to tack it on to make it look like something. I am challenging the unions in Barbados to provide wage slips for workers to show them how much money they would have received for productivity bonus.

I am also calling on the trade union leader, Mr. Trotman, to come and explain to the workers of Barbados why he could not reach an agreement and why one leader had to 'duck' through the night to go and sign it, to out-fox another leader. Can you imagine that we have a situation in this country where union leaders are trying to out-fox one another just to sign an agreement to look good? They then brag and say that they have signed the agreement. I did not know there was an election race between union leaders anymore where they have to 'bound up' and sign the agreement so as to get ahead of one another.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is a fact. The Honourable Member for St. Peter would tell you that it is a fact, that they out-foxed one another to sign an agreement. Now, there are some who cannot even speak about the agreement. I said in August in this Chamber that if the leader of the Barbados Workers' Union does not watch what he is doing to the workers, soon from now he will be the head and he will have no union. I am saying it and it will happen. When there is a situation where the heads feel that they can make decisions and do not care about the mass base, something is wrong and something will happen. The Barbadian public must be told that the unions are not representing their interest. When unions are serious in looking after credit squeeze more than looking after the interest of the workers, one must ask what is the usefulness of the unions.

I am saying in this House today that what went on at the Port a couple of months ago was a credit squeeze. The Leader of the Barbados Workers' Union must come and tell me what role he played at the Port when he closed down the Port. It was supposed to be in the interest of the workers and at the end of the day, the workers gained nothing from that strike at the Port. Can anybody in this House tell me what the workers gained when the Port went into a strike? I want to know. I can tell you what the employers gained.

One thing I can say for the Commissioner of Police. He knows how to back his men. The union leaders must tell me if they know how to back their workers. It is a serious thing. When people know how to back their workers people will curse them, but do not worry, that is true leadership. The Right Honourable Prime Minister backs his Cabinet, the Brigadier backs his men but it is wrong for the Commissioner of Police to back his men.

I am saying today that the police have a case and it needs to be highlighted by every single Member on that Side and on this Side. What is wrong with the Democratic Labour Party talking about a better relationship for the police. Every time the Right Honourable Prime Minister gets up in here he says that he has nothing against the police but he puts a case

for the Barbados Defence Force. Check Hansard - last week he did it and this week he did it. If I say something about the police, something is wrong.

Let me tell you something. I have nothing against the Barbados Defence Force. I have good reasons to support the Barbados Defence Force. I am saying today that I support the pension that is coming for the Barbados Defence Force but I also feel that the police is on the beat every single day and hour. During the police off time they must be in court. When there is a particular case to solve they cannot say they are working 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m, because they must solve the case before they go home. How can you then say that they have the same hours as other people?

I am saying today in this House that the police in Barbados should get an allowance right across the board. I am not prepared to give a figure but somebody must acknowledge that in these dangerous times the police need something special to acknowledge that they are doing a good job to help solve the particular crimes they have to deal with.

I am not telling the Right Honourable Prime Minister to break the Treasury. The Right Honourable Member understands the type of work that the police have to go through. There is nobody in here who benefits more from the police than the Right Honourable Prime Minister so he understands their workings. Every night and day they protect him, they do not protect me. He must understand that it is not a personal thing. I want to see them happy to continue to look after my Prime Minister. He is my Prime Minister too. He knows I have a lot of respect for him but he must not allow other people to put wrong things in his head and attack the wrong people. Don't play with the army when you are with the army.

I am saying that the 0.5% productivity bonus which the Prime Minister is bragging about - I am surprised to hear my Prime Minister bragging about a 0.5% that he is giving civil servants as a productivity bonus. I am surprised and I am challenging the unions to bring a pay list and show me how much money civil servants will get for productivity bonus at 0.5%. I challenge all of them to bring it. If you have done such a wonderful thing for civil servants then show off your goods. Produce a list and put it in the newspapers. Ask GIS to publish it for you because 0.5% means nothing. In this day and age when a Government can brag about \$0.5 billion more in taxes and then come in here and tell me that some man who is a genius is tacking the 0.5% on to the increase. What genius is he? He is a fraud. He cannot be a genius.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I will withdraw it. What I am saying is that it is deceiving for a man to come and tell

anybody that some wise man came along and offered 6% and then 0.5% and some genius hooked the two together and what a great thing it is. I am saying that if the 0.5% was so good, he would be prepared to publish it all over Barbados. He knew the civil servants were hijacked and short changed that is why it was tacked on to the increases.

Let me say this, we are living in a country where we have to get back to basics. I would like to see my people back to people tourism. I would like to see Barbados back to the community atmosphere that I know about. What we are having in Barbados now is a very selfish group of people. People feel that once they get everything for themselves, that is the important thing. They just do not care about the other person down the line. This is exactly what is happening in Barbados and exactly what is going to destroy Barbados - a selfish attitude. What hurts me is that I hear people in here talking about what happened in 1989 where a few people got everything they wanted. They criticised the Democratic Labour Party for that.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Okay, that may be justifiable. If that is justifiable tell me if what is happening today could be justifiable, where six sets of people down town can get \$ 100 million in super profits - I am not talking about normal profits, I am talking about profits on top of profits - and the ordinary people cannot get one cent. You tell me that this is a fair and just community. Are you telling me that 28 black people in this Parliament looking after that and we are proud of that. All of you tell me that you will vote for this. Something has to be wrong with your conscience. Fortunately for the Deputy Speaker, he cannot vote because he is in the Chair but I am challenging all of you to put your conscience to the vote today. If you have a conscience you cannot vote for this; any man who votes for this cannot have a conscience. He cannot like black people nor he cannot like poor people. Not when the private sector getting millions and you are throwing scratch grain at the poor people. 3.20p.m.

All of a sudden black people are walking with scratch grain throwing it at each other and we are talking about the slave masters of the past. That is exactly what they used to do. Now we feel that because we are politicians, we can do that.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The slave masters of the past sold us. We sold each other. The slave masters were of the past but we sold each other. Now in Barbados, we have a new slave master where we as politicians are doing the exact thing that the slave masters did 100 years ago. Walking

around with a lot of scratch grain throwing at the fowls - cluck, cluck, cluck, cluck.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, please stick to the point. Please proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: A couple of weeks ago I was told in this Parliament to come to Parliament in December because the first tranche of the 8 per cent will be repaid. I came here today to support that part and the piece I expected to support is not before me anymore, so I am wasting my time in Parliament. I trusted the Acting Prime Minister, my parliamentary representative from St. Thomas, when he told me that the first tranche will be repaid today. Now, today, nothing like that is before me. I do not know what to come to this Parliament to expect anymore.

I am now being told that the 8 per cent will come and the workers will have to make a decision how they want their money. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the workers had their money in the bank, they would have had interest on that money so that is the first thing the Government must recognise. Whenever a deposit has been made it must accrue interest. I am saying to the Government of Barbados that workers did not have an 8% cut. They had an 8% investment in the economy and I expect them to get a return on their investment. I expect them to get back their full investment with a return. It is an investment. I do not know anybody in here who would put an investment down and do not get back anything, not even the Honourable Member for St. Thomas who also had an investment in this investment plan that the workers had with the Government of Barbados. I would expect the Honourable Member for St. Thomas being the attorney as he is, to be the first person to lead a case for the Government refusing to pay an investment which the law entitles you to.

They tell you, you must get a fair rate of return and if the law states that you must get a fair rate of return, then the Attorney General has a good case, as he did for the people at Arch Hall, to bring against the Government because you did one against the Government and have a record to bring one against the Government, for the civil servants so that they can get a return on their investment that they made in 1994.

You must bring this particular case against the Government, because you would have recognised that they would have been doing something that they should not have done. I am also being told, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if the workers accept bonds that they will be paid 1 1/2%. Nobody

knows what the economic climate will be a year or two from now. I am telling the workers because I cannot tell the trade union leaders any more, they do not listen to anything in relation to workers any more. I am telling you the parliamentarians, who claim that you represent the interest of the workers that 1 1/2% rate of return is not enough because when you look at the economic climate in Barbados today, this rate of return cannot be a justifiable rate of return. With inflation going up, with us going into a credit squeeze, it is obvious to me that things will be inflationary and this rate has to be higher to protect the civil servants if you expect them to accept your investment offer.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I do not believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a country like Barbados should continue to have a 2 1/2% deficit every year. It is time we see a surplus budgeted in here because we need to have money to pay for other things.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that we need to see tighter budgeting in this particular House. We need to see a much firmer grip on the revenue for the simple reason that we have had a lot of revenue passing through the hands of this Parliament and there is no evidence that it has been used wisely.

My last point, Sir, the private sector and the trade union movement in this country stand guilty today. I read an article by one of the gurus who lodged himself in Warrens admitting that the manufacturing sector in this country must face up to what is happening in the world. Between 1991 and 1994 when the Democratic Labour Party tried to get them to do the same thing, they marched over 30 000 people through Bridgetown. Stopping this economy from going where it should have gone. Do you remember that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I am saying today, Sir, that the economy of Barbados is where it is because of those same people who now sound like if they have new gospel but it is only cold soup that has been warmed. I am saying that those are the people who stopped this economy from going forward, those are the people who sold out to Trinidad and Jamaica; for the simple reason, if our manufacturers had accepted the advice given to them at that time we will not be now playing the catch up game, we would be far advanced of places like Trinidad and Jamaica. But now we have to play the catch up game because the same advice that they were given, they were jealous because it came from people like us; they could not accept it but now they feel that they can pass it down.

If the manufacturing sector had taken the advice in the early 1990s, they will not be now begging people to accept that type of foolishness. They deprived this country of

valuable foreign exchange and now you will hear the trade unions, the manufacturing sector and the private sector begging people to be more productive. How can you be more productive when they put a thought in your head that instead of going forward, you should march and pull down your own country? A lot of the blame must be on their shoulders. I expected a union like the Barbados Workers Union (BWU) to stand up and be counted; now all of a sudden the BWU is at the top, they can tell you what the Barbados Labour Party is thinking of and the next minute the Prime Minister can tell you what the BWU is thinking of. There is no more relationship where the workers' interests are being protected or being looked after, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am calling on this House and I am very grateful that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has just walked in because I will be calling on him to let his conscience be his guide. I know that once he lets his conscience be his guide, he cannot vote for this piece of legislation.

I thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. 3.30 p.m.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I listen with interest to the contributions made by the Members from the Opposition but more particularly to those made by the Honourable Member for St. John - it was interesting.

Sir, I am here on a mandate. In coming to contribute to an important debate such as this, I like to consult with my constituents, the teacher from Parish land; the clerical officer from Inch Marlow; the carpenter employed in the public service from St. Patricks; the police officer from Charnocks and the mason from Gibbons. They have mandated me to let this Honourable House know that they understand the issues, Sir. They understand that the Government as an employer cannot pay beyond its means. They, Sir, as voters would obviously like Government to give as large an increase as it could but they understand as well that Government as an employer must operate within its means. They also know, Sir, and they anticipated that the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) would come as usual with a tremendous dose of crocodile tears.

The reality is, that if this Parliament were a parole board herein constituted to determine whether or not the sentence of the Opposition Democratic Labour Party should be shortened for acts against workers, the board having listened to the presentation from the Opposition would have concluded that they have demonstrated no remorse for previous acts. Sir, there is still the propensity toward recidivism and they will more than likely fail at the rehabilitation efforts that have been made. They have not been fully rehabilitated from their previous ways in terms of their treatment of workers. Therefore, Sir, the sentence of a

long period in the wilderness which has been imposed on them should stand firm. That is what these workers have asked me to say.

Sir, Hansard is a wonderful document, Sir. It is such wonderful reading that it is even good for bedtime reading. In the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 1995, in which this Side sought to give effect to its policy of preventing the Government from using salary cuts as a mechanism of public policy especially in the face of squandermania; the result in the debate at page 666, the vote was taken on the third reading, there was a division and when the numbers were checked there was 19 for and 6 against. When we looked around we saw one Mr. D. J. H. Thompson and one Mr. D. St. E. Kellman voted against this Bill. They were adamant that they would want to retain the ability to cut workers salaries as an instrument of public policy. That is the net effect of the Bill.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. I will just like to remind the House that in that same debate at page 601 a Mr. J. O. Tudor said, and I quote, Sir:

"I endorse the suggestion that has been made that we should properly return that money".

Meaning the 8 per cent.

He was the only one on that Side and he was supported by Dr. R. C. Haynes but Mr. Tudor was showing some prescience.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: The other important point is that the Leader of the Opposition in his own words indicated how much he was an integral part of the arrangements which would have led us through the period 1991. Sir, on page 1007 and this is the Reduction of Emoluments Act, 1991, one D. J. H. Thompson, said,

"I would not be in this Chamber today defending or explaining these proposals had the Prime Minister who has the respect obviously for each Member of his Cabinet not come to us and indicate the basis of his negotiations. That is all I am saying. So all the talk that you hear out there. I can tell you this. I did not come in here blindfolded."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the increase for these public workers has to be set in proper context. First of all, let us look at the adequacy of the Government's ability to meet these demands. Let us also consider the realistic nature of the demands. Mr. Deputy Speaker, nothing in the other wage settlements that have been settled so far for this year is higher than what the Government has offered. Further...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Earlier today the Prime Minister said that 50% of the revenue is spent in paying wages.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: If you tie that to the surplus revenue that Government rakes in, what the unions were asking is far below 50% of the surplus revenue.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, the essential point is that against the backdrop of very low inflation rates, Government has to guard against giving increases that amount to that. In all of the previous five years the level of increase granted by the Government has far outstripped the rate of inflation. In very real terms, public servants have been better off as a result of each and every pay increase that they worked for; their money could buy more.

Sir, it has been agreed way back in 1993 during the first Protocol that there would have been an effort made to link pay increases with productivity. With that effort, Sir, all of the pay increases granted have so far outstripped productivity.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Prime Minister said in here today that productivity was only 0.5%.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I thank the Honourable Member for attempting to support the point I was making, that on the basis of an agreed formula the last measurement for productivity increase during the current period came up with the result of 0.78 per cent increase. The amount that is being offered by the Government, 4% and 2.5% far outstrips inflation. The result is, that workers are better off than they would have been before. I do not have to list the long and expansive amount of allowances and the improved conditions. I do not have to list the vastly increased number of persons employed in the public sector. I do not have to remind the House of the permanent nature of the appointment that have been made because persons who have given 20 and 30 years of good service do not now have to be worried about going home with a day's notice. I do not have to list the vast sums that have been spent on improving the physical conditions within which the public servants laboured day by day; improvements in air quality and in physical accommodation, Sir. Lastly, Sir, I will deal with the Opposition Leader on the social partnership at another point in time. He has made some interesting points all of which are worthy of rebuttal. We will have a full debate on the

social partnership in here at another point in time but today is not the day. 3.40 p.m.

I would just say that the social partnership has indeed been an instrument and, certainly the last Protocol we have come to, has been a mechanism by which we have given effect to our new form of governance which is based primarily on consultation.

The early social partnership was essentially an economic device of stabilization. It did not have enshrined in it the very powerful principle of consultation. I can tell you, sir, that certainly, as the Chairman of the Subcommittee of the Social Partners we have been the mechanism for consultation on all major social and economic issues; whether they were structures within the Government Service or whether there was reform of various Government Departments, but opportunities will arise for those detailed discussions later.

I just want to let you know, Sir, that the constituents I have spoken to, who are also workers within the Government Service, have asked me to let this Honourable House know that while they might have been desirous of an even more generous increase than is on the table at this time, Sir, that they certainly understand that set within the context of the rate of inflation which is very low; set within the context of the productivity rate being low; that the Government's offer is generous and they want to receive it in their hands as soon as possible.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to conclude the debate and to say that I thank all Honourable Members who have been generous enough to speak in this debate. There is obviously a sense of realism regarding what is before the House.

The Honourable Member for St. John gave a speech which I would expect him to give if I were in the Opposition. The Opposition must do its duty. The Government is not going to be offended if the Opposition appears to be opposing. The Honourable Member for St. John referred to the fact that on the last occasion when CTUSAB had settled first the argument that was being advanced by Government was that CTUSAB represented the largest number of the unions. That was not the essential point being made.

The point that was being made and the consistent point I have always made is that in circumstances where there are many unions representing workers; and where there is not a vast divide on the proposals being put to the Government; and where there is a clear view that what is being asked for

is fair and reasonable; that Government cannot appear to be supporting just one- upmanship by rejecting the first offer to settle and settling with a subsequent union merely because that union wants to appear to be more aggressive than the others. In this particular instance the same precept applies.

The Government received an offer from a credible union that we thought was fair and reasonable. It was within the same ballpark as that which was eventually put by other unions. The same precept we applied on that instance is the same precept we are applying today. A fair and reasonable settlement has been reached and we have accepted from a union on the understanding that we could not thereafter commit ourselves to settling for a higher rate with somebody else after the fact.

The Government, contrary to what the Opposition Leader has said, has been consistent in the matter. We will continue to press that the unions should try to better coordinate their positions to avoid this appearance of conflict in our industrial relations.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy used the opportunity to say that the trade union movement has failed Barbados over the course of the last five years. I would like him to continue to keep saying it over and over again. It is a wonderful thing when an opposition party feels that it must have everybody on its back and cursing everybody. I love it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Continue in that present trend. He will continue thereafter whether from across there or elsewhere to be the main spokesman on behalf of opposition parties.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, the same sense of attention to the national purpose that obtained throughout the history of the labour movement has been in existence for the last five years. What the Democratic Labour Party has not yet got accustomed to is the notion of a labour movement living reasonably well with a labour party administration.

I would imagine, therefore, that the House can agree that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy's statement was inspired less by an objective evaluation of the circumstances in the country than by a sheer political calculation that the interest of the DLP will be best served by having antagonism between a BLP government and the labour movement, so I have accepted his views in that context. I have discounted them by a massive factor for lack of objectivity. I would urge the trade union movement not to take him seriously because he was just speaking from his deep-seated Opposition heart. I know he knows better and I will forgive him as I trust he would hope to be forgiven.

The Honourable Member is a person who likes to champion the cause of the small man. Even if he confuses

the small man's interest with the big man's interest, that characteristic conclusion we have seen in that instance has now been represented in other aspects of his political conduct. I can forgive him, Sir, and I hope the House could forgive him as well.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East made one riveting point which ought to be ceased, namely, that while inflation between 1995 and 1999 prices had increased by 10% cumulatively, whereas public servants have received at least 15% increases so that public servants have been better off in real terms and this now will continue that trend.

Those were the only two matters raised in the debate that are worthy of consideration. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that, Sir. A

division was called for. The bell was rung.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:-

Ayes: Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, Hon. G. A. CLARKE, Mr. L. R. TULL, Hon. H. F. LASHLEY, Hon. R. R. FARLEY, Hon. R. D. MARSHALL, Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. D. CARTER, Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, Mr. D. T. GILL, Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS, Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, Mr. N. A. LYNCH, Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM and Miss H. E. THOMPSON - 19.

Noes: Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON and Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN - 2.
3.50 p.m.

ORDER NO. 5 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (PART-TIME OFFICERS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1999

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issues are the same and I propose that in this item on the agenda as in all others just simply to move that the Resolution be now passed.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that. *The question was put and resolved in the affirmative.*

ORDER NO. 6 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (TEACHERS)
(AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1999

*On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by
Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Resolution was put and
resolved in the affirmative.*

ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
RATES AND SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES
APPLICABLE TO THE PERSONAL STAFF
OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir,
The original Resolution contained an error and that has been
corrected in an amendment to the Schedule to the Resolution
that has been circulated. I therefore beg to move, Sir, that the
Resolution and the amended Schedule to the Resolution do
now pass.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative.

ORDER NO. 8 - RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE
SCHEDULE TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL
(CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) ACT, CAP. 6

*On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded
by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Resolution was put and
resolved in the affirmative.*

ORDER NO. 9 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
PAYMENT OF INCREASED WAGES TO PUBLIC
AND CASUAL EMPLOYEES

*On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by
Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Resolution was put and
resolved in the affirmative.*

ORDER NO. 10 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
PAYMENT OF INCREASED EMOLUMENTS TO
PERSONAL ASSISTANTS TO MINISTERS

*On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by
Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Resolution was put and
resolved in the affirmative.*

ORDER NO. 11 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
(REMUNERATION AND ALLOWANCES
OF MEMBERS) ORDER, 1999

*On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by
Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Resolution was put and
resolved in the affirmative.*

ORDER NO. 12 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARIES (REMUNERATION AND
ALLOWANCES OF MEMBERS)
ORDER, 1999

*On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by
Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Resolution was put and
resolved in the affirmative.*

ORDER NO. 13 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
INCREASED COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE
TO GOVERNMENT PENSIONERS

*On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR seconded by
Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Resolution was put and
resolved in the affirmative.*

ORDER NO. 2 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT
INCH MARLOW, CHRIST CHURCH

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the
Resolution before this House seeks permission to acquire
two adjoining parcels of land measuring a total of 24 936
square metres at Inch Marlow, Christ Church for the purpose
of providing recreational facilities. This, Mr. Deputy
Speaker, is in keeping with Government's proposal to
acquire land in the communities to provide recreational
facilities for the residents of those communities. A number
of recreational facilities have been acquired over the last five
years and it is Government's intention to continue to acquire
recreational facilities at various constituencies across the
island.

At this location there has been a cricket team in
existence for twenty years. The facilities were very
inadequate. The Walls Cricket Team played at this site.
Government since 1994 was prepared to acquire these
parcels of land. The relevant surveying plans are included
and attached for Honourable Members. The Attorney
General has certified this Resolution to be in order.

With these remarks I beg to move that this Resolution
do now pass.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am
not going to be long on this particular one. All I would like
to find out from the Minister is whether he has sought a
change of use for this particular property through the Town
Planning Act.

The Government has been coming to Parliament and bringing these Resolutions without seeking the necessary change of use and all I am asking the Minister to assure this House is that he has done exactly that. That is all I am asking. 4.00 p.m.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Thank you very much Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I can start by way of assistance to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. It is clear that he concentrates exclusively on his constituency but if he made a trip around Barbados he would know that no change of use is necessary as the land is already in use as a playing field. However, regularization of the nature of the ownership needs to be done because you will recall, Sir, that there was a playing field in St. George which, for many years, was used by the sporting community at Flat Rock but it was not owned by the Crown and the private owner subsequently decided to change its use from a playing field to agriculture leaving the entire community efforts at sports in problems.

Sir, it is for this reason that I support the acquisition of this land in the constituency of Christ Church East to support the efforts which have been made for many years to establish sports as one of the principal areas in which the talents of this area are brought to the fore.

Indeed, Sir, I would want to signal to this Parliament that I have already made request for another similar situation to regularize the playing at Fairy Valley as it is not on Government lands. The community there is fearful that at some point in the future the owner would claim his land to use for whatever purpose he may so desire. I have therefore requested as part of the airport expansion project that those lands be acquired. In fact, that has been taken into consideration and Grantley Adams International Airport, as part of its corporate responsibility will therefore be providing two playing fields. One at the front end closer to Charnocks where a new playing field with full sporting facilities will be constructed on the side of the road opposite the airport car park and one on the back end of the airport going towards the Regional Police Training Centre. The playing field there, which is currently on lands which are privately owned, is to be acquired by the Government, compensation paid to the owner and proper facilities installed.

Sir, this matter of the provision for sports facilities is not about sports alone. In all these cases, the Government will not be merely providing playing fields but will be providing multi-purpose facilities which can be used not only for cricket and football but also the provision of hard courts for netball, road tennis, basketball and the like. The indoor facilities are important as community resources.

Sir, there are many voluntary sports and youth groups in the Christ Church East constituency. In this particular area there are a number of groups of long standing. The Hopewell Cricket Club, the Inch Marlow Football Club and there is a very successful football club from Silver Sands. In fact, there is excellent friendly rivalry between my Silver Sands Football Club and the Pinelands Football Club. We look forward to the day when we do not have to go to Pinelands to be able to play night football and to have our lights installed in the Silver Sands area in order to have our friendly rivals from Pinelands come up to play some night football in the area.

The provision of these sporting facilities provide an opportunity for our young men and women to be involved in meaningful activity. It is interesting to note, Sir, that in a study which was done some time ago on criminal risk factors - it is already a document of the House - concern was expressed about the level of involvement of young people in formal organisation. A number of persons who had strayed from the path of rectitude indicated a disturbing trend of the lack of involvement in anything. Those who got into trouble at an early age tended to be under-represented in church, sports or youth group. There is a very clear correlation between persons staying on the straight and narrow path and involvement in groups. The provision of community facilities help in that regard.

In fact, Sir, times when people see young people hanging around a corner, under a dunk tree or on the block, there are not all criminals, Sir. In the absence of a common place, in the absence of a common meeting point, where else can they go? The houses in the average village, in the average working class district do not have large back patios, dens and family rooms where the people in those areas can use one of them as a community meeting place. The street is as much a part of the home of a person living in a village than anything else. It is not just a place on which you drive to go from one point to another.

What we would want to be able to do, Sir, is, in these large communities to provide multi-purpose facilities which can be used as a pavilion as well as an indoor meeting place so that the football club; the cricket club; the netball club; the youth group; the men's group; whatever group there may be; would have a place where they can meet and conduct their business. They will have an address to which correspondence can be posted and they will have facilities which can be used day and night. There will be bathroom facilities, facilities for changing, facilities in which they can have proper exchange and interchange with other groups. It is for those reason that I support the acquisition of this land.

I look forward, Sir, to the Ministry of Sports honouring its commitment to construct a multi-purpose pavilion and community complex on the grounds. I look forward, Sir, to

the facilities being able to accommodate the expansion of the existing playing area. At present, Sir, because there is only one parcel of land on which sports is played, there is just a small cricket field. The area in question to be acquired would allow for a larger cricket field as well as a separate football field to be established in addition to the hard courts and the physical building.

Sir, I also want to draw attention to the fact that this would also provide enhanced opportunities for persons in the Christ Church area. Sir, right now because of an absence of facilities, talented footballers from Inch Marlow, St. Christopher and the Silver Sands area, if they want to be able to join a top notch team - a team that has good home facilities and take part in high levels of sports - they go to Dover. There are players in Lead Vale who play for Paradise Club which is situated at Dover.

We would want to be able to have within Christ Church East the talents of our people used to represent teams in our area but none of these teams are able to boast of a ground on which they can host a proper competition. The grounds on which they practise at Lead Vale is one quarter of a football field with one set of goal bars on which *Cab Layne* and those talented players who are known to the footballing community in Barbados developed their talents. Sir, in Parish Land, the field is mostly used by footballers and again, this is a third of a football field with no goal bars. In Silver Sands and Inch Marlow, there is again half of a football field adjacent to Silver Sands Park run by the NCC.

Sir, we look forward to being able to take our rightful place within the BCA cricket competition, within the BFA football competition and indeed, on to the wider sporting disciplines. As I indicated earlier, the larger and more important point, Sir, is that we want to establish proper community facilities to give young people in groups who have to meet to play; to transact business; to train; to relax; to be able to have options other than leaning against the wall or under the dunk tree; which is, in fact, all that most of these communities have at present. 4.10p.m.

Sir, I will make the call from the Floor of this Parliament for areas where there is already basic infrastructure to be improved, so that the fullest use can be made of it. For example, St. Patricks where there is a playing field, there are hard courts, there is a pavilion but there are no lights, so that the hard courts which are already there, this time of the year, could only be used up to five o'clock because by 5.15 p.m. it is dark. In that particular situation the hard courts are not even adjacent to the road. They are in the back with cane fields near to them so you would understand that the netball team with the young ladies will not be able to practise effectively.

Sir, I look forward to the support of my colleague the Minister of Sports in these matters and I look forward to inviting all my colleagues, Members of Parliament to the grand opening of this sporting facility, to serve the people of St. Christopher, Silver Sands, Inch Marlow, Hopewell, Chancery Lane, Gibbons and the surrounding areas. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy asked...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir, because even though the piece of land might have been used as a playing area, it was never an official playing field, Sir. It will now become an official playing field, so whether it was used for 20 years, it is not important.

The problem is that the Government must "tell the House whether the change of use was sought and whether it was given by the Town and Country Department.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member for St. George North.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not think the change of use was necessary, since as I have said before, within the last 20 years the portion of land was never used for agricultural purposes. It was always used for sports and the Town Planner has given approval for this acquisition.

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

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

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

ORDER NO. 3 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225 OF LAND AT KINGSLAND PARK, CHRIST CHURCH FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Resolution before the House seeks permission to vest approximately 495.6 square metres of Crown lands, Lot 9 Kingsland Park, Christ Church in the National Housing Corporation (NHC).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this parcel of land is vacant for one reason. I think it was acquired around 1985 or thereabout for land to place the ABC Highway. Cabinet had agreed in 1995 that all the residual land on the Highway should be vested in the NHC, so that the NHC can use the land for their capital works programme. This portion of land is east of the Deighton Griffith School and although it is a very small piece of land, we believe that this will help the NHC in the capital works programme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want to detain the House too long, but as Honourable Members have been asking for in previous debates, I would just want to make the point at this time that the NHC, over the last two or three years, has embarked on the Settlement 2000 Programme in which they have begun over 250 starter homes. We have also plans to develop about 500 lots within the space of the next two years. Most of these homes are almost completed. In fact I must say that we have completed homes at Gall Hill in Christ Church, Gall Hill in St. John, Apes Hill, Orange Hill and Mount Brevitor in St. James. We have done houses at Flat Rock and we have also implemented units at Groves Cottage, St. George and Briar Hall in Christ Church. We have also done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a number of terrace units in Maynards, St. Peter and we have completed 20 units at Flat Rock. We have completed 28 units at Orange Hill which will be opened in the next couple of weeks and we are now completing the Pondside units.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must say that over the last year or so, the NHC has been very busy providing the solution to housing for Barbadians. It is a fact that a lot of work has been done. They have actually over committed themselves and we are currently looking at solutions to see how we can provide more housing for Barbadians.

As you are aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, housing is a capital intensive industry and it takes a lot of money to provide the solution. I must say that the NHC is not only providing the solution to housing in terms of providing house spots and providing 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom housing or the terrace units but we are also providing loans. The General Workers' Loan Fund, over the last 10 years, starting from 1989 to today, has committed itself to lending more than \$50 million. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the records show that approvals from 1989 to present, totalled \$50 million.

They have actually disbursed more than \$33 million to date, with a short fall of about \$16 million and Members have asked what will happen. We will soon come to Parliament for a guarantee from the National Insurance, because Members have been asking what about the General Workers' Loan Fund. It is a fact that a number of people have been seeking loans from the NHC. We have provided

solutions but at this present time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to put more money in the NHC for distribution for the loans for those persons who are actually seeking loans.

The Government is committed to providing the solution, but we must say that in 1994 over \$14 million was disbursed. There was a time in the Democratic Labour Party when less than \$35 000 was disbursed. We are now disbursing on an average, more than \$3 million per year. Since 1994, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NHC has disbursed more than \$20 million in five years.

The Government is committed and we will continue to provide the solution. We will put more money into the General Workers' Loan Fund, because we understand our social commitment to the country. We want to give the House the assurance that before the House breaks, we will be able to inform Members of the solution that will be taken to prop up the General Workers' Loan Fund.

With those few remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg that this Resolution do now pass. 4.20 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened to the Honourable Member for St. George North and I wish I could believe everything that was said. The truth is, the reason why the National Housing Corporation is short of funds is because they decided to build projects called Pondside, the Warrens Project and their headquarters at Country Road. They have spent nearly \$14 million on the project at Warrens and there is nothing to show for that amount of money spent. If you look at the beginning of the road at Country Road you will see a project being built by the Insurance Corporation of Barbados (ICB). When you go a step across the road and you look at what has been spent on the project by the National Housing Corporation, you will see that they have not got out of the foundation properly. They have spent nearly as much money on that project as the Insurance Corporation of Barbados (ICB) spent on their property.

If the Minister could tell the House how much money the project at Pondside was supposed to cost and how much money has been spent on it, one would understand how the workers of Barbados, when they want a loan cannot even get a loan. What is more ridiculous, Sir, the National Housing Corporation is now using poor people to recoup the money that they have wasted on those three projects. They are now charging poor people a large sum of money for a house that does not even value that amount. If one is to only borrow from the Prime Minister's Budget of this year, one would recognise that the Prime Minister said in his Budget that house and land should cost no more than \$55 000, but you

cannot get a house and land at the National Housing Corporation for \$55 000, you have got to look for \$80 000 or more.

I am saying that I do not buy the excuses given in here today why the National Housing Corporation cannot find money to lend to people. I am saying that they have squandered the money. When a particular contractor was given the contract to build the property at Warrens, I warned this House that the National Housing Corporation should not be getting involved in that type of relationship because the National Housing Corporation could not even repair houses and yet they wanted to build complexes at Warrens. Now that they have wasted the taxpayers money, they are in here telling us that the reason why they do not have money is because they have lent it to poor people. I cannot buy that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I know better. I will not support that loan when it comes to this House until a proper account has been given about the money that has been squandered by the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you were to leave here today and you were to go to Bakers, in St. Peter you would see a house that is smaller than a slave hut and cost more money than anything that they have at West Terrace.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this House. No decision has been taken as yet to value the houses at Bakers. There is no fixed cost determined yet. In any event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if anybody goes to Upper Bakers where those chattel houses have been built and see the total amount of land space behind each house allowing for further development of the house, then nobody will take the line that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is taking.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that cannot be a point of order because I never said anything about cost at Bakers. The point that I am making at Bakers and the Honourable Member for St. James North cannot deny this because he is always in St. Lucy and I am telling him to come to Broomefield and I will show him a slave hut that is bigger than the houses at Bakers.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the houses at Bakers are neither slave huts in terms of their size nor their appearance. In any event, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said earlier today that slavery was justified based on the reasons he gave today.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, You know that I never said that. He has gone back to the church, so I will expect better from him than to say something like that.

The point I am making, is that the slave hut at Broomefield in St. Lucy is much bigger than the houses at Bakers. Imagine, we are talking about going back to Africa and we expect people to give us money and this Government is treating people worst than the slave trade because at that time a house like that would have been much bigger ...

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. That cannot go into the record. This government is not treating the people of Barbados the same way as the people were treated during the slave trade. That is offensive and it is almost claiming that this Government has been conspiratorial in the commission of international crime. It cannot go in the record. The slave trade is now widely recognised as a crime. He cannot impute to my Government or any government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are engaged in criminal activity. It is not even an imputation. It is a gross misrepresentation of facts which has to be expunged from the records. No Honourable Member, on this Side is associated with any behaviour even slightly resembling that dishonorable thing called the slave trade.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Lucy, I would like you to withdraw those statements.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, No, No, I will withdraw those remarks, Sir, but what I would say, Sir, I must admit, Sir, he is really getting back to his place in Cabinet. He is really batting fine. I am saying, Sir...

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. I hope he has a place in the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) if there is still a Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can assure you that they will always find a person like me in the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). I am not thin-skinned neither can anybody get me to jump a bandwagon. I am worth more than that. I want you to know that as long as my members come to you, your position is looking shaky.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying, that when the slave trade was in Barbados they built houses in places like Broomefield and that when you measure those houses in Broomefield, and I am prepared to take you there, Sir, the houses in Broomefield are bigger than the ones being built by the Barbados Labour Party in Bakers.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I will call on the Prime Minister to make sure he deals with his Minister of Housing because even though those houses happen to be in St. James North,

geographically, there are still in St. Peter. You cannot do that to your Prime Minister especially at a time when your Prime Minister is talking about championing the rights of poor people. They are building houses smaller than what the slave masters built and that is regrettable.

One would have expected, Sir, after hearing the contribution from the Honourable Member for Christ Church East today about how large the back patios of some persons houses are and how you can easily go to the back patio and do certain things and how poor people have to go on the streets to do these things; how can you come now and offer something that is smaller than a slave hut to poor people who have worked tirelessly in the fields to develop Barbados. This is all they are getting from this Government, a small house smaller than a slave hut and at a high price - regrettable. 4.30 p.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy says that I know St. Lucy well. I have come across three or four things resembling slave huts in St. Lucy. That is true. The houses to which the Honourable Member is referring in Upper Bakers are nothing like slave huts. They give people a chance to start up housing and then develop the houses.

The Honourable Member continues to mislead the House.

Mr. D. St E. KELLMAN: As I keep saying, you keep fighting to get back in Camelot but we do not have any place for you. I have already spoken to my family about that. At least you would be accepted over here.

I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that somebody in this Parliament must tell the directors at National Housing that their interest is not the one to be represented but the interest of poor people must be represented and this is important. The directors must understand that National Housing is to represent the interests of poor people and not the interest of the directors and their friends. That is why I am calling on the Minister of Housing to tell me how far the project at Warrens is. I want a percentage, the total cost and the expected date that we could rent that property to somebody. That is all I want to know.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all I wish to support the Resolution before this Honourable House. I must congratulate the Honourable Minister for the building of ten houses in the Gall Hill area which allow ordinary poor people there to get houses.

I would also like to say that I must congratulate you for the two houses you are building in Applegrove which is in

the constituency of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central. In Christ Church the population is increasing considerably and we need a lot of houses and certainly land. There is a portion of land to the eastern side of Hinds Transport, some 15 acres, and the land is owned by the Government and it was idle for a long while. I know there were little problems before but I believe that since the people of this country are in need of housing that the Honourable Minister must make an attempt to purchase the land in that area where the people of Christ Church East Central and certainly Christ Church West Central can have an opportunity to own their homes.

I must say that this piece of land that is vested in the National Housing Corporation, 495 square metres is a small area and from my calculation it can accommodate about 700. In that area the housing in the Kingsland area is situated on plots which are about 6044 square feet. I hope that when this land is up for sale, it is subdivided in such portions that the people who already have houses in that area would not have houses of a smaller size on that particular site.

In Christ Church I can say that every Thursday for the past eighteen months I make a trek to the National Housing Corporation and I would really like you to pay some attention to this. Ten of my constituents qualified for loans in the last 15 months and, unfortunately, as I walk through my constituency they are saying that the loans have been approved but they have not reached the stage where they actually put their hands on the dotted line.

You mentioned a short while ago that you spend about \$3 million a year in house loans and I know that you are working very hard, Honourable Member for St. George, but I would like that you pay a little attention to what is happening in the National Housing Corporation. I believe that the loans should be spread all over Barbados.

Although I just said that I was fortunate enough to get ten houses I believe that in relation to loans I would like to see at least 50% of my ten people receiving loans where they can promote themselves. It is difficult when you walk through your constituency and people are asking the same question over and over. I hope you would pay special attention to that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to the houses that are rented it would appear that on occasion when houses are made available to serve the Christ Church area and when people are making applications those houses should go to Christ Church people rather than to people from other constituencies.

It is very difficult for me and certainly the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central when there are houses made available in those areas to hear that people from

other areas are coming to get the houses. The people who live there already make a fuss to put pressure on you.

Mr. Minister, I am looking forward to two things. Certainly, that at least 50% of my people who have been waiting for the past 18 months get their loans and secondly I sincerely hope that when the land is divided in that area of Kingsland that they are kept at a particular size so that the houses which are already built would not decrease in value.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to respond briefly to two things. One, if you look at the way how the loans are spread in the last two years you would see that St. Michael got about \$6 million in two years; St. James - \$ 1 million; St. Peter - \$800 000; St. Lucy - \$400 000; St. Andrew - \$1.5 million; St. Joseph - \$500 000; St. John - \$400 000.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have the figures in front of me and they are not \$400 000 for St. John. I want to see that document. He has to make that a document of the House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is quoting from a document. I do not remember the exact Standing Order but he has to make that document a document of the House. I believe he should oblige the House in a spirit of courtesy.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Yes, I will make it a document of the House. In Christ Church - \$2.3 million; St. George - \$2 million; St. Thomas - \$600 000.

Under the Democratic Labour Party the only persons who got loans were in St. Lucy. In one year St. Lucy got all the loans from the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House giving the impression that I approved all the loans for myself and St. Lucy.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would also want to make the point that the Warrens complex is not being built out of the National Housing Corporation funds. There is a consortium of financiers who are supporting the Warrens Complex. I would have to give the House the figures at a later date because I do not have them at this time. The other point that the Member for St. Lucy made about the size of houses; the size of the houses at Bakers is 430 square feet. I must say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the size of the houses at Bakers is the same as was built under the Democratic Labour

Party and under the present Government through the years and they are starter houses. 4.40 p.m.

Houses were built under the Democratic Labour Party at Hinds Hill of 430 square feet. Some were built also at West Terrace and Husbands of the same size. These are starter houses and it gives people the opportunity to expand. We are doing the same size house at Gall Hill. I must say that all these houses have now been accounted for. The ones at Pondsides started off at \$6.5 million and there is a question being asked here which we will bring the answer to.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. Since we have to be fair to the records, the Honourable Member will agree with me that when we visited Gall Hill, we both expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of workmanship there. The houses were moving, the kitchen door was made out of plywood that was cut against the grain and the general standard of construction was extremely poor. They look pretty, the paint is very nice but as you get through the door, the whole building including the flooring is shaking. We agreed that they needed to be propped properly; that the pipes needed to be covered and that there is a lot of shoddy work that needs to be corrected because the prices are very high for poor people. You can get a greenheart house which is a better quality for the same price which you are selling those starter homes.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have looked at those houses. Our technicians have gone through the houses and I am giving you the assurance that a lot of technical work has been done to correct the problems that exist at Gall Hill.

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

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

ORDER NO. 14- RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE
FOR FINANCE OF THE PAYMENT OF PRINCIPAL
AND INTEREST IN RESPECT OF A LOAN BY
THE TRANSPORT BOARD OF US \$15 MILLION
FROM C.I.B.C. CARIBBEAN LIMITED
FOR THE PURCHASE OF A FLEET
OF 110 NEW BUSES

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the level of bus service provided by the Transport Board is quite inadequate and unreliable. During the summer of 1997, the Transport Board was operating below 50% of its fleet.

During that time they had less than 60 units per day on the road to service Barbados. In 1997 the Transport Board purchased 100 new buses consisting of 80 Mercedes Benz buses and 20 Hino buses. This was as a result of an international tendering process where price and technical specifications were considered. Since these 100 new buses came to Barbados there was marked improvement but the unreliability persist. At that time, about 25% more of the travelling public in Barbados were using these buses. As I have said, the service is still unreliable. Many pensioners, school children and the broader public are disadvantaged by this and as the Minister responsible for transport, it is my intention to make sure that rural and urban Barbados are given the kind of service that they should be given.

I went to the bus stand a few weeks after becoming Minister and saw lines and lines of people there that night at 8 o'clock awaiting the services of the Transport Board. I had a conversation with the Manager responsible for the terminal and I was readily informed that this is the norm. There are about 16 parking bays in the terminal and the ones that mostly had problems were Flat Rock, Drax Hall, Martins Bay, Sam Lord's Castle, Society, Bathsheba and Kendall Hill. There are problems existing in these areas.

At that time complaints were made to me. One lady said she had left home at 5 o'clock the morning to go to work and could not get a bus. I talked to the Supervisors there and I asked them to make some phone calls to the Transport Yard and very quickly some buses appeared there. We were able also to double up the Flat Rock and Drax Hall and asked the driver to make the round so that people could get home. What I am trying to say, Sir, is that something has to be done with the service at the Transport Board.

Sir, back in 1998 the Board made recommendations to the then Minister of Transport and Housing to purchase some more of these buses because they were quite satisfied with the service and performance of the Mercedes and Hino buses. The Mercedes buses are available from Brazil and the Hino buses - the smaller buses - are built in Barbados by Acme Manufacturing Company. The Minister at the time was satisfied with the Board's request and it had the Minister's blessing that these buses should be ordered.

Currently the Transport Board has a fleet of 228 buses. It should be noted that of this 228 buses, 57 of these buses are at least 15 years old. Many of them are in a deplorable condition and not only is the cost of maintenance prohibitively high and is likely to become increasingly so, but the bodies are deteriorating as well. In fact, a Board survey has recommended that most of these vehicles that were bought before 1997 and 1998 be retired.

The fleet size required to provide an adequate quality of bus service on the routes is 210 of which 175 minimum is

needed per day to transport the travelling public in Barbados. Actual bus availability average below 140 buses during 1998 and 1999 hence the unreliable delivery of bus services. This was a result of a minimum of 88 buses either being too costly to maintain or being totally unserviceable. 4.50 p.m.

The distribution of the fleet is planned as follows: Mercedes Benz 80 of them that were manufactured 1997 and 95 that have been ordered now were manufactured in 1999. Also the Hino buses, 20 that were manufactured in 1997 and the 15 that have been ordered now, were manufactured in 1999.

With respect for the specific reason for purchasing the Hino and Mercedes buses, the Board of Directors was completely satisfied with the performance of similar buses purchased in 1997. This decision was fully informed by the advice of the technical personnel in the Management of the Transport Board as well as the positive response by the Barbadian public resulting in the increased patronage previously enjoyed.

It should also be mentioned that 15 of these buses coming to Barbados early next year are air-conditioned buses. The Transport Board presently has an existing arrangement with a few of the tour companies to move tourists from the airport and the seaport. This brings a guaranteed amount of cash back to the Transport Board. When the buses are not needed for these charters, they can be used on the regular route of the Transport Board. This would provide much comfort in travel because they are air-conditioned buses.

Also, coming in this fleet will be two buses for the handicapped. The Minister of Social Transformation and myself had discussions on that matter and he is very happy to know that his prayers have been answered. When I visited the United States of America in the 1970's, I saw buses equipped for the transport of the handicapped. When the buses comes to the stop, the door opens and a hydraulic lift comes down where a person in a wheel chair, can wheel it onto to lift. It goes back up and the person is lifted onto the bus.

Aside.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: As the Minister said, this is part of the social revolution and I have a lot more to bring to Parliament to take care of these handicapped people.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: The Cabinet at its meeting on January 14, 1999 agreed in principle that the Transport

Board should go to the public to pursue funds for the financing of these buses. The Transport Board invited 11 companies to submit quotations for the financing of these buses. They were: Plantrac Engineering Limited; City Bank, Trinidad; NFG Exports Limited; Simpsons Industrial Limited; CIBC Caribbean Limited; Royal Bank of Canada Regional Office; The Barbados National Bank; The Caribbean Commercial Bank; BS&T Motors Limited; Charles McEn Barney and Company Limited and the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments.

Some of these companies submitted proposals. They were: Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and BS&T Motors Limited. Charles McEneaney and Company Limited did not respond. Tenders came from the other companies and banks: NSG Exports Limited; Simpson Motors; CIBC and the Caribbean Commercial Bank. LH Consulting Limited was engaged to analyse the financing proposals on behalf of the Transport Board and the option is that we should go with CIBC which gave us the best terms on financing.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport and the Ministry of Finance and Planning supported the recommendation of CIBC and it was selected to give the financing. The Transport Board has informed the Ministry that negotiations with suppliers of the buses are progressing smoothly. Orders for some 95 of the Mercedes buses and 15 of the Hino were given and have been placed with Simpson Motors and Acme Manufacturing Company respectively. The phototype of the Mercedes Benz chassis has been examined and found to be in order. A delegation of the Transport Board will shortly be going to Brazil to look at this phototype.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going all out to make sure that the travelling public in Barbados who do not own their own transportation are not disadvantaged.

Aside.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: The night we had the lighting of Bridgetown, it rained consistently and many streets/roads were blocked around Bridgetown. It took me about 45 minutes to get from Heroes Square up to the junction by Government House. I saw lines of buses on the road. When I came back to Bridgetown, I went to the bus terminal and I found people almost ready to fight for transportation in Bridgetown. It was so bad. I spoke to management and realised that some of the buses had to go to a regular charter from the airport and the rain stopped the buses from coming. The conditions which obtained in the bus stand were so bad that people were ready to fight. I saw some of the security guards trying to cover themselves from the dangers that might have existed in the bus stand. I believe that with the coming of these buses that we will be able to

give the travelling Barbadian public the service that they really deserve.

With these remarks I ask that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am very happy to hear from the Minister, Sir, that he has personally asked for these buses to be checked out. Also, that they will check out the date of the chassis to make sure that the chassis are the 1999 chassis and not anything that dates back prior to 1995.

I am also happy, Sir, to hear that these buses will be coming to help out on all routes throughout Barbados, but I would like the Minister to tell me how many of the other buses that came in here in 1997 are still in use in Barbados today. I also would like to find out from the Minister how many of them broke down the same day they came to the island. How many of them were never used. How many of them had to get new transmissions in one day's time after they were put on the road and how many of them came into the island with tyres that were used already.

I want to know, Sir, what is the cost of the bill to the Transport Board from the workshop for servicing new buses within one week of them coming to Barbados.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: For the simple reason, Sir, the first time I know in the history of Barbados that a new bus can be purchased with old tyres on it, is the last time those 100 buses came into the island.

Asides.

5.00 p.m.

I am also requesting this time that the Minister get on the aeroplane to Brazil to make sure that this lot of buses which we will be getting are new and not reconditioned because this is a very serious point. You are seeing buses on the road looking new and when you investigate them and when they go to the workshop you would realise that they are reconditioned and not new buses. I want to be assured by the Minister that this money that I will be voting for today is for new buses and not reconditioned buses. I support the Minister in bringing this Resolution to the House to borrow this money to buy the new buses because the roads in St. Lucy are so bad that they are mashing up all buses. So at least the new tyres will be able to grab the roads that we have in St. Lucy.

I want to know from the Minister, how come you are buying 110 buses and you are telling the Barbadian public that this is the answer to the transportation problems in the country and at the same time you are saying it with your right hand, you are issuing permits with your left hand to the other sector that the Prime Minister has complained to this Parliament about, where they are a group of people who feel that their employees must work for X amount of money before they give them a cent. The Prime Minister came to this Parliament and said that he was stamping out that type of behaviour. In one breath, the Prime Minister is saying one thing and his Minister is doing something quite different. I want to know who is right on this particular issue, if the Prime Minister is right or the Minister.

What worries me, Mr. Deputy Speaker - I cannot believe that this was said by the Minister and he needs to correct me on this one, I believe he was misinterpreted by the Press and the Press will have to defend themselves to tell me that they did not misinterpret anybody - I saw an article in the Press where the Minister is saying that he is stopping Indians from being charged \$100 000 or more for a permit and that he is reducing the price. This is one of the most regrettable statements that can be made by a Minister in Barbados. I have never heard any Minister on that Side...

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is saying that he saw in the Press attributed to me, a statement which says that I said, I am reducing the cost of permits to Indians. I never said that and I never saw that in the newspapers either.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I want the newspapers to apologise to the Minister because he said that he never said that. I am saying here today, Sir, that it is the first time I have ever seen a Government who feels that it is their duty to defend Indians from Barbadians. Every day, every night, every week, every second, there are people going through Barbados, even in my constituency, buying a shirt for \$5 and selling it to Barbadians for \$40 and there is nobody to represent them but we are having a minister representing Indians over permits. Let the free market play its role. I am saying that the Prime Minister has to answer this charge. Somebody over there has to get up and defend this because a shirt that cost \$5, people are charging \$40 for it, that is 800% increase and nobody defends the poor man in this country but a newspaper is telling me that a Minister is defending the Indians from the poor people. What worries me, is that those permits are now finding themselves in the north of Barbados.

I have to defend the Prime Minister and myself on this because we have people who have permits that operate on

those routes. When Highway 2A is fully open up again and the traffic flow eases from the bottom road, as we call it, to the top road or from Highway 1 to Highway 2, it means that there is going to be chaos and they are going to be fighting for nothing because the traffic will go back on the top road again. Those permits that have been issued to Speightstown will interfere with the financial position of those people in St. Lucy and St. Peter who own permits. I will defend the Prime Minister on this for the simple reason that the people who live in St. Peter and St. Lucy must survive too.

I am saying, I do not welcome those new permits that were issued because the Prime Minister said in here that they behave in a particular way on the road because of something called a quota system that they must meet. That type of behaviour is not welcome in rural Barbados and that system is against the trends in rural Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas will tell you that statistics will prove that we do not have as many traffic offences in the north of the island as in the other areas. I can assure you that will be reversed since these permits have been switched to those people. We have to defend that record in the north. That type of culture is unknown to the north where minibuses will pass you, if you are travelling with eight cars ahead of you, all of a sudden you are now feeling them - 'Woof and when you look the same numbers you are hearing you are seeing because they are trying to meet the quota system.

I hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Transport Board will make sure that these buses are the type of buses that are ordered and approved by this Parliament because the last time I voted for buses in here I actually lied to myself because I thought we were voting for new buses. I hope today that what we are voting for is actually what we are going to get because I can assure you if that trick is played on me again I will not be voting for any more new buses in this House because what I voted for is what I expect to get and this Government is accountable for not delivering what I voted for the last time around.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am lending support to the Minister of Public Works and Transport on this Resolution for this loan to improve the bus service of Barbados. I also extend my sincere thanks to the Barbados Transport Board and its officers for the service which they have provided for the residents of the constituency of St. Michael North West which I represent.

It is quite unusual to hear the Other Side making comments in relation to the government side as far as the privately owned buses are concerned. In looking at the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) of 1981,

they talked about the ownership of individuals of privately owned concessionaires. On page 19 of that Manifesto, it said;

"to maintain the privately owned mini-buses as an important sector of public transport..."

In 1981, they were supportive of the individual transport owners, now here in 1999 they are critical of the Minister for giving assistance to the privately owned mini-bus operators in this country.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member does not understand the point that I am making.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: What we are saying, Sir, is that we have no problem with the government issuing permits. We did it earlier when we issued the ZR's permits and we were severely criticized for it. We do not have a problem with this Government issuing permits. In the same breath you cannot tell me that a particular sector is doing something which is regarded as wrong and issue permits to that same sector. That is the point.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, should I continue? I do not want to be in any debate with the Other Side. We all know for a fact that a former member of St. Michael East has the answer to what you are saying so we do not need to go any further with that.

In reference to the Leader of the Opposition referring to a novice on the Other Side I will have to be a novice and I do not want to go into that because on January 20, 1999, the people of St. Michael North West proved who is the novice. I do not have to come in here and accept from the Leader of the Opposition who is the novice. The novice, as far as I am concerned, was proven by the people of St. Michael North West on January 20, 1999. 5.10p.m.

Let us get back to the subject before this Chamber. I am one of the people who is a road person. I am very impressed with the service given by the Transport Board. I am not one who will walk around and pretend that I know something about the technical aspect of the vehicles as far as the Transport Board is concerned.

I can tell you if you really want to see the beauty and the service of the Transport Board buses, stand alongside the road any Sunday and see the 24,48 and 30 buses conveying Barbadians going on site tours across this island. You would see the quality buses that the Transport Board has provided for the commuters of Barbados so do not let us debate whether the chassis has a false number or whether the engine has a wrong number. The fact is that the Transport Board is providing a valuable service in this country with buses that are far better than some of the other buses you find in other territories.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things we must talk about as far as transport in this country is concerned is the movement of transport on the roads of Barbados and the type of service provided by the Transport Board. One must congratulate the Transport Board because some of the roads the buses travel on to provide service to commuters in this island are questionable and they still provide the service even in the area of St. Andrew where the road has been improved but prior to that there were little winding roads with broken bridges here and broken bridges there.

When you take the fact that the Transport Board has workers who take in the last bus at 12 midnight, get to the depot probably about 1.00 a.m., and still find it fit to be back out on the road as early as 5 o'clock in the morning to provide service for the commuters of Barbados. The minibuses in this country come on the road as late as 7 o'clock in the morning and swipe the roads of Barbados but the Transport Board workers are out as early as 5 o'clock.

One must not come in here and give the impression that as far as the Transport Board in Barbados is concerned it is something we must take a baseball bat and beat it left, right and centre. Give the Transport Board the credit that is due to it for the service it provides in this country.

As I continue, one of the highlights, Sir, as far as the Transport Board is concerned - I am going to say this and I know the media is going to pick it up and it is going to go far - but when you consider the deportment and at least the dress of the members of the Transport Board, both male and female, as against the service provided in Barbados by those people who operate the private concessionaires, you must ask yourself why must we be criticizing the Transport Board for the service provided when you can get onto a Transport Board bus and see and understand the cleanliness of the driver, the service provided and the management of the Transport Board.

I support this Resolution based on the fact that there is a shortage of buses as the Minister said and also the Transport Board. Yes, you must understand that on the roads of Barbados today there is a lot of vehicular traffic and if a bus has to move from Oistins for 1 o'clock and is

expected to get to Bank Hall for an average of 1.30 p.m., it is going to be highly impossible because of the amount of vehicular traffic on the road so the buses must run late, not because the buses want to run late but they are forced to run late because of the heavy traffic that is on the roads of Barbados, but the service is still provided.

I worked with the London Transport. I had the privilege of working there that is I why I can talk on transport. In working with the London Transport, I am speaking with authority, our bus service has high marks because one must consider that when you take the service provided by the London Transport which has heavy traffic in central London and you consider they must work to a time schedule, they must be at a point at X time and leave that point at Y time. Many of the Transport Board buses in Barbados do not run an hour late or two hours late. Very seldom anyone could say to anyone of us in this Chamber that they got into a Transport Board bus, unless there was an accident, and it arrived at their destination almost an hour or an hour and a half late.

My concern with the Transport Board at this moment, where all the praises must go, is that there is still a little bit of criticism I must give them. The criticism I have is with the recruitment of staff which will have to be considered if you want to maintain the service provided.

I say this with the understanding that over the last couple of months the Transport Board has been seen to be recruiting some excellent people but in between there are some bad eggs. Those little bad eggs in between could take that whole service and throw it into a situation where the public of Barbados will cry shame.

When you look at some of the movements of some of the drivers and the things they do with the buses, I think there should be a system in place at the Transport Board. There should be inspectors on the road or there should be comments coming from the general public to the Human Resources Manager of the Transport Board in cases where certain drivers are driving those buses as if those buses are on the race-track. We are not asking that the buses be governed. We are asking that some consideration be given to the pedestrians on the road and also the other vehicular traffic. It is not all the drivers at the Transport Board. You could count them all on one hand. Those that are on that one hand could spell bad for the other workers at the Transport Board so that is my concern as far as the Transport Board is concerned.

I would also like to compliment the Transport Board on something I see. The unity that exists among the workers of the Transport Board should be an example to a lot of other statutory boards. They get together. They hold functions

together. They are responsible for looking after the many senior citizens who go on those bus rides on Sunday. The movement of the staff of the Transport Board can be seen as what is known as a customer relationship situation.

There are many other organisations, many statutory boards in Barbados that do not seem to be customer related. The Transport Board, in my opinion, at some point seems to be customer related. I would like to compliment whoever is responsible for training the staff of the Transport Board in relation to the understanding of the movement of the commuters and who realise that customers come first and treat them the way they treat them all the time with courtesy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support this Resolution based on the fact that I think the Transport Board has the right people in place. From the Board back to the manager I believe are concerned and are actually involved with providing Barbados with proper service.

There are some other statutory boards in Barbados, and I like to say this, that should take a leaf out of what is happening at the Transport Board when they are dealing with the situation of the public. The public must come first and the Transport Board's management seems to understand this. That is why I support this Resolution because with more buses on the road the acute situation that faces the Transport Board now in providing the service they provide I think would be, at least, erased.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the other concerns I have as far as the Transport Board is concerned is the problem with the broken down buses. I know some of them are equipped with VHP units. 5.20 p.m.

I would think that in this modern day when there are so many things happening we are fortunate that we have not had a situation similar to the minibuses. The Transport Board buses have been vandalised, but we have not had a robbery at the moment. I believe that the members of the Transport Board, those who do not have the VHP units on buses should be given the use of a cellular phone or something like that so that should something happen along the route instead of having to travel a distance to get a phone message they would be able to call and get some relief for that condition right away.

In some cases, a bus might have just a bulb problem or a situation where it stalls somewhere along the line and the driver has to sit and wait for a message to be passed on to the Transport Board. I believe that some system should be implemented where that driver could have access to communicate to base without having to wait any long time at that point.

In the area of the minibus service, since we are dealing with money to advance the Transport Board I do not want to see a situation where the minibuses of Barbados exceed the service provided by the Transport Board.

If we would come to the point of the bus terminal, I would like to say in this Chamber that only last night we were discussing former Ministers of Public Works and saying let us separate those and look at who over the years have been Ministers of Public Works who deserve credit and acknowledgment. I would like to compliment at this time the Barbados Labour Party at the time when Vic Johnson was a Minister of Public Works because he provided us with some of the best roads in Barbados and also what is considered to be a terminal that is better than any you would find anywhere in the Caribbean.

Barbados has one of the best terminals to be found anywhere in the Caribbean. I would like it said in here that compliments go out to the Minister of Public Works at the time of Mr. Vic Johnson, for providing the commuters with the Transport Board bus terminal in Fairchild Street.

One of the things that we have looked at over the last couple of weeks - we must say that it is manned to the point where other things are under control but I would like to see more of a police presence - is the bus terminal at late hours. I believe this is the time that things happen. When people go partying something may happen and you do not have the police presence so that somewhere along the line commuters start to fear going into the bus terminal after certain hours.

I think that the bus terminal should always be one that anyone could leave at any time and be able to walk and catch the bus that will take them to their destination without any fear of anything happening to them in there.

Another point I am concerned with is the movement in the bus terminal where people have to channel themselves between the vendors on the sidewalk. I am not saying that the sidewalk should not have vendors but I am saying that the entrance to the bus terminal should be left free so that if anything should happen inside of the terminal there should be a situation where those commuters inside would be able to get out without having to force themselves over baskets and trays and things that block the entrance to the bus terminal.

I am appealing to the Transport Board to look at the situation in front of the entrance to the bus stand to see if they can get the vendors who sell there to leave the entrance free so that there would be a safe zone for those who are going in and those who are coming out. I am appealing to them so that when the time comes that anything should happen that one will not say I told you so.

I close in saying at this point that the Barbados Transport Board and the Minister responsible are on good grounds based on the fact that they understand the need for better transport in this country and to provide more buses and to provide a service that, as my friend on the Other Side would say, the poor people will benefit.

I think that as long as poor people will benefit by something and this Government is doing it that I have no other alternative but to support it. I thank you, Sir.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too join in welcoming this Resolution whereby a guarantee is being provided by my Government for a loan of US\$15 million to allow the Transport Board to purchase another 110 vehicles. I can only hope that certain problems experienced by the travelling public will be solved and that there will be certain short-term benefits that will accrue from this initiative. I do not think we can properly speak about the Transport Board without recognising that there is an increasing sense of crisis about transport in Barbados, both private and public.

In the last five to six years, we have added appreciably to the vehicular traffic in Barbados. In a sense, we all welcome that, because an increasingly motorised population speaks directly to the increased material well-being in the country but that increasingly motorised situation to which I referred has brought serious problems. There is no question that traffic in Barbados is everywhere both in peak and non-peak hours in urban and suburban Barbados. We are taking much longer to reach from point A to B.

With the increased number of vehicles we have also had a dramatic increase in the number of accidents both serious and non-serious. The Government therefore has got sooner rather than later to confront some of the many issues in transport in Barbados and determine what we are going to do so as to make sure that our roads do not become a car park and that this serious problem of traffic congestion is relieved.

We also have other problems of a serious nature which it seems to me that we are ducking. Can a vibrant transport board coexist with the large number of unregulated minibuses that we have in the country? If the answer to that is no, then I think that we will all agree that a viable transport board cannot exist with the large and increasing number of unregulated minibuses in the country. What are we going to do about it? It is a serious matter which is going to call for great courage and great resolve on the part of Government and Government will have to determine whether it is going to be prepared to play a limited role or no role at all for the transport. If there is a role, should it not be a complete role, and what are we going to do with the minibuses for the long-term?

The other question is, can we continue to have the large number of minibuses on the road and public transport buses without a transport authority. There is nothing short of bedlam on the roads. You have situations where minibus operators have been given particular routes and it is well known that they do not service those routes. If sometimes for example a bus is to go to the lighthouse in St. Lucy but when it gets to Speightstown they only have two people in the bus, it is well-known that they often tell the people to get out. They are not going any further. It seems to me that we are not doing a service to the travelling public of Barbados, a public that has to rely on these services. If we do not have authority at the level of Government, then we should have a regulatory authority that will, for two or three breaches of that nature, withdraw that permit. There are real problems. 5.30 p.m.

In terms of the Transport Board they have other problems but I mention this particular one now. Can the Transport Board provide an effective service when its repair shop is off the premises outside of their control and in the hands of others. Buses that should be repaired in one hour sometimes take two days because they have no control over the workshop which is off the premises and in the hands of others. There are serious problems worthy of a full scale debate in this country ranging over one full day in Parliament. Perhaps the time has come when I should bring a Private Members Resolution and let us get the debate started.

In relation to the Transport Board I want to make a few specific comments. Rural Barbados is the first victim of any shortage of buses by the Transport Board. Those who have permits servicing rural Barbados often do not honour the terms of the permit and as soon as there is a shortage at the Transport Board the people of St. Sylvan's Village, Sugar Hill and Bathsheba are the one to suffer in circumstances in which there is an over supply, it seems to me, of transport facilities for Wildey and the Pine - the urban and surrounding areas in Barbados.

I want the Minister to give this House an assurance that with the new buses rural Barbados will get their due. It is not fair that you can have every ten minutes, ten minibuses and five Transport Board buses going to Wildey areas, in urban and suburban Barbados but sometimes two hours or three hours pass by and the people of Sugar Hill cannot get a bus. That cannot be fair.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: The Honourable Member for St. James North is attributing to me some specialist knowledge that I do not possess. You do not have to go there, you just have to pass through Collymore Rock to

appreciate the point that these areas are tremendously well served and rural Barbados cannot sometimes for three or four hours get any public transportation.

There is a real problem in the bus stand. There is no proper supervision in the bus stand and drivers do as they like. It is well-known that they often decide that they are not going to Sugar Hill. At times, not until the people have reason to protest in a vigorous way - 60 or 75 of them - a bus sometimes is sent after two or three hours which should have been sent before. There is nobody to appeal to, the driver just decides that he is not going and there is nobody to tell him that there is a schedule and that he must respect the schedule or he will be dealt with. The drivers are in control.

As a further illustration of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just let me give you another story. About a year ago a new service was introduced in the Bissex Housing Area. Some mornings the buses go in at six o'clock, other mornings they do not go in. The people took the matter into their own hands and went down and saw the management, I think it was then Mr. Greenwood at the Transport Board. After they made their own vigorous protest, they came to see me. I was absolutely and utterly proud of this. It turned out that the driver said that the mornings they did not go that they did not remember. You cannot have a serious transport policy where there is a service to a particular district and drivers go when they like and claim that they do not remember. That is precisely what happened and all those who are connected with the Transport Board will tell you that it is true. Yet those drivers continue to work and there is no evidence that they have ever been disciplined.

We have real problems at the Transport Board. I wish I could join with the last speaker in heaping the showers of praise that he did on the Transport Board but there is a lot that is wrong there. If there is nothing else that is remembered about my remarks is that the travelling public of rural Barbados are the ones who are the victims.

I want to make another point. I do not have the evidence from within the Transport Board, but it seems to me that enough care is not taken of the buses. The question that was asked earlier, I would like to have an answer to. How many of the buses that were provided two or three years ago are still functioning? It is to my knowledge that within weeks of the buses being put on the road that a worrying number of them were damaged. There is no reason why that should be so. If they were operating their own bus and each driver was the owner, it seems to me that much more care would have been taken. I know that the union is strong at the Transport Board and it gives the impression that the tail is wagging the dog but it seems to me that there is need for a much tougher policy in relation to those who are involved in accidents on a regular basis; in relation to those who do not follow the schedule as laid down and in relation to buses

getting to district ten, fifteen or twenty minutes after they should get there. A transport policy is only an efficient and effective policy when you can move according to the public schedule. You can say to someone with whom you have an appointment that you are leaving at 8.45 from six miles away and barring any accident, you should be there in half of an hour. You are sure you will meet them on time. The policy is not effective or efficient when you get to your destination an hour late simply because the bus did not come on time. It is very important that the schedules are published and that the schedules are stuck to.

It is well-known, those of us who have lived in England that sometimes the bus stops for two minutes simply to ensure that the driver gets at a particular destination at the precise time published. That is what is called a proper transport policy. Where punctuality and sticking to your schedule become guided principles. It cannot be done unless you have inspectors. It cannot be done unless you have a disciplined staff who understands the importance of sticking to the schedule and being punctual.

The Transport Board has a far way still to go. We all make recommendations for our constituents to work there. From time to time I recommend people but I am also careful to add that they should only be recruited if they meet high standards. You will not be able to deliver a high quality service unless you recruit and train high quality staff. In that regard you must resist the pressures of the politicians because if the right people are not recruited, you cannot in the end have the right staff.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I do not conceal that. I speak to the Personnel Manager and the Manager like that and I do not conceal that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to be very serious about these matters. I begin by telling my own people that...

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: If you do not qualify, I tell you that you may not get through.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: It does not prevent me from being in here for five terms. 5.40 p.m.

Asides.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: In the end people have their regard for honest) and they recognise that in the end we

will be landed with pure mediocrity if we do not set the right standards. It makes no sense appointing a man who cannot fill the job. I have had people who failed the examination twice and they come to me and I tell them it is very unfortunate, that you failed the examination twice. I may be able to help you with something else, but I would not be fair to you or to the Transport Board if I should be tempted to put pressure on them to give you a third try or to continue to employ you. I think we have to be honest about that sort of thing.

There is no question about it that rural Barbados needs special attention, that the drivers need to be properly supervised and that they need to be strong and effective leadership at the terminals.

Asides.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: There is no question about that. It is also my judgement that you cannot have the damaged buses, and sometimes the damage is very slight, damaged in the sense of malfunctioning, back on the road in time, if you have lost control of your workshop.

I have often likened that to a man building a house and claims he has a home, but he has no control over the kitchen. It is outside. He cannot get a cup of tea when he wants it. I do not understand what sort of arrangement that could be and I think that if we have made an error, we have to recognise that we have made an error, but I do not see how we can have a Transport Board with a large number of vehicles with the clutch going and the breaks are giving trouble. Half an hour in the workshop will put the vehicle back on the road, but you have no control over the workshop and that particular malfunction is taking two days to rectify before it gets back in the pool.

Sir, I welcome the Resolution and hope that certain short-term benefits are derived, but a lot has to be done at the level of policy and there are some large matters relating to transport, public and private that we cannot continue to duck in this country.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Sir, I rise in this debate to lend my support to the Honourable Minister of Transport, who introduced this Resolution seeking this guarantee from the Government to finance the acquisition of new buses. We are all aware that

this is part of an overall programme which the Government has been working toward and indeed the first set of buses were bought some two years ago.

I want however, Sir, very quickly to address some issues that pertain to the school transportation system because I believe there are of great concern to a lot of us in the country. As a result of that, the Transport Board and the Ministry of Education earlier this year commissioned a survey, reflecting the state of the schools' transportation system and the quality of service and the numbers reflected therein.

The Ministry of Education currently subsidizes school transportation for all pupils in Barbados who want to buy what are known as scholar passes. Indeed, on average we budget \$2.5 million every year although the sum may increase depending on level of ridership on the buses, particularly since there is no cap on the amounts that we would pay for. Provided the person is a child in a school uniform and buys a scholar pass, then they are entitled to purchase it at the subsidised rate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the survey showed that the Transport Board is the largest single carrier of school children in Barbados, carrying on average some 31% of the traffic for persons going to school. Also, while it does not occupy a monopoly over the entire market, it carries the largest numbers as a single operator when compared to mini buses, ZR vans, the private transportation and other means. While this has been the case there has been an appreciable increase in the number of school children travelling on privately owned buses, whether they be in the cavity of ZR vans or in the cavity of minibuses.

This has led to a number of difficulties both in the bus stand itself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well as on the route itself as well as at the schools. There has been a clear increase in the level of complaints coming from parents, principals, teachers and the general public as to the standard of behaviour that is reflected very often, particularly among children catching the privately owned and operated vehicles.

I signalled some three or four weeks ago, Sir, that the Ministry of Education was particularly concerned about this state of affairs and that we felt that unless the operators, parents and children tidied up their actions, we will be prepared to take action which will see school children being precluded while in uniform from running and catching the ZR vans particularly.

We believe that this is the thin edge of the wedge in respect of the lack of discipline and that very often the complaints which pertain to lateness as well as non-arrival

of students at school, invariably are linked when we start to examine some story that relates to their mode of transportation and invariably it reflects a mode of transportation that is the ZR van.

We believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the time has come for us to seriously investigate the feasibility of the establishment of a dedicated school transportation system. We believe the purchase of the 128 new buses which the Transport Board is embarking upon will give us the opportunity to be able to move in that direction.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: In those circumstances the Ministry of Education and the Transport Board have been meeting over the last six to eight weeks with a view toward the establishment of a dedicated schools transportation service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are looking at also involving the minibus operators as opposed to the ZRs, by way of charter to operate within that system. 5.50 p.m.

We believe that a hybrid system that reflects the Transport Board stock as well as minibuses chartered from private operators, can provide that service that is needed under a very clear and comprehensive set of guidelines that would require comprehensive training of all personnel working on the buses servicing the school children. It would require as well, compliance with a strict set of guidelines. Failure to comply with those guidelines will deprive those persons from operating within the system. It would also look at seeing how we can effectively move children around recognising that as the Honourable Member for St. Joseph said, that the traffic situation in Barbados has become extremely worrisome within the last few years.

We have now reached a point where an internal committee within the Ministry of Education, will have to be set up to examine the opening and closing times of schools in Barbados, to determine whether in truth and in fact we have not yet reached the point of having a staggered system of opening and closing of both primary and secondary schools when the day comes. This of course will require extensive consultation with all of the stakeholders. The committee, once set up, will be required to report having consulted with the unions and the National Council of Parent-Teacher Association and the general public to determine whether we cannot have a system that perhaps sees the opening of schools from between 7.00 and 7.30 a.m and 9.30 and 10.00 a.m so that we do not have the same pressure of traffic throughout the day.

What I can say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there has been a reduction of some 25% in the total school ridership in Barbados with us moving from some \$4.35 million in 1996 to some \$3.26 million in 1999. We have also seen a 32% reduction in the number of scholar passes sold between 1996 and 1999 reflecting a reduction in demand for school transportation. We believe that is inextricably linked with the policy of partial zoning which was introduced by the Ministry of Education in 1995/96, which was specifically designed to ensure that children would be able to attend schools within the zone in which they lived. Those zones were carefully chosen not only by reason of geographical proximity but by reason of the bus routes after a clear and careful consultation with the Transport Board at the time. We believe that this reduction in the demand for school transportation has come as the result of the enlightened policies for partial zoning. There may well come very soon the need to extend the partial zoning a little further as we have indicated on the introduction of that policy. That, Sir, is for another debate at another time in this Honourable Chamber. Suffice it to say, that the situation now is one that the Ministry of Education is addressing with a degree of urgency particularly as it relates to the concerns pertaining to discipline and the level of lateness and non-attendance of school particularly by those children travelling on ZR vans. On the question of how not just to prevent them from travelling on ZR vans but how do we put that comprehensive service of school transportation in place that would not preclude private operators from being able to earn a living from children going to school because they are still part of the paying public. Therefore, we are sensitive to that and give the assurance that whatever solution we bring, will in fact reflect that sensitivity. We believe that the issue of the staggering of school times is one that this committee will report back to us and I anticipate that before the academic year of September 2000, we will have new provisions in place looking at the staggering of the times once those consultations have taken place and we bring it to Cabinet and this Honourable Chamber for debate.

Equally, I want to address one or two constituency matters before I sit. These pertain to the plight faced by a number of persons particularly pensioners and persons who may have minor handicaps who live in developments. There are a number of houses in Jackson Terrace and Friendship Terrace where persons have to walk off the main road from the bus stop very often with heavy packages and are unable to carry them properly and face undue hardship just coming from the supermarket and from going into town. The Transport Board responded in some limited form in respect to Friendship Terrace (behind Bim) although, even then, the bus will only come into to a certain part of the development and persons who live down at the bottom of South Lowland or right up to the top at North Friendship still had to walk fairly long distances with their packages. It is even worst with the people living in Jackson Terrace Stage 1 because those people have to walk as much as three-quarters of a mile

or in some instances a mile with packages coming from the main road in order to get home and there are a number of retired persons who simply are not physically able.

I believe that this is not unique in my constituency and that it has happened in other constituencies where there are developments that are off the major road where the buses do not ply the developments. Something has to be done. Either there has to be a determination that the buses can be allowed to include that as part of their routes or the Ministry of Public Works and Transport has to find some way of issuing some kind of licence that is limited to persons just ferrying passengers within a local district. We may not want to go there given the problems they are having with the private operators. A lot of minibuses do not do it either. The ZRs do not do it either. The ZRs ended up competing with the minibuses and the Transport Board buses on the major arteries of the country. However, there is a need for local transportation in many of these developments particularly where you have a large number of pensioners living. I hope that we can either find a way for the Transport Board extending the routes of the buses in those areas or that we look at some kind of licence that has a limited entity that does not carry more than a certain amount of passengers so that the area could be serviced on a regular basis.

I also want to address the matter of the residents of Lears, Skeete's Road, Jackmans and Hothersal Turning. I want to do it particularly since the Chairman of the Transport Board lives at the foot of Skeete's Road and therefore should be cognisant of the problems of the residents of that community. When the buses come down - if we are talking about the Lears and Bibby Lane end, and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will face this problem with his constituents - from St. Joseph and Proute on mornings the residents cannot get space on a bus. When they come down from Market Hill end on the side where the Chairman lives they cannot get a seat in the morning and those people who lived on the outskirts of St. Michael are prejudiced by the absence of bus routes that are dedicated for those short haul routes. What happens is they are then forced to take pirate operators who are not covered by insurance and woe betide the day there is a serious accident in this country and three or four people die in that accident and not one person can get a cent for injury, or worst still, lost of life because of the fact that the insurance is not there for the pirate operators. 6.00 p.m.

I am saying to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is not a matter we can treat lightly. This is a matter that demands the urgent consideration of us. I have been speaking to the General Manager of the Transport Board about it. I think he appreciates that the problem has to be resolved urgently

because it is very simple. If you provide a service and you fail to provide it where there is a demand, people will find an alternative solution to meet their demand and that is exactly what is happening. Clearly, the demand in the country, as the Honourable Member for St. Joseph said, is great and acute.

When the buses go up there in the morning and are coming down full, by the time they reach Bibby's Lane far less Hothersal Turning, there is no room for anybody in Bibby's Lane to get on a bus. If you really want to try and take a Transport Board bus then you have to leave home by 6 o'clock in the morning. Now it cannot be fair for those people living in those communities that they should be deprived of public transportation when there is not a transportation problem for other communities and both sets of people are paying the same taxes in this country.

I think, Sir, this matter needs to be addressed urgently and addressed seriously. It is a problem not just for those in the areas in my constituency that I spoke about but almost for anybody living on the periphery of St. Michael and Christ Church who do not have dedicated bus routes but who rely on buses coming from far and at that time in the morning cannot get a seat.

I trust that a word here is enough. I trust the next time we speak about this matter will not be in the context of someone being injured on a pirate operated vehicle but would be in the context of coming to congratulate the Transport Board for meeting the vacuum that exist in suburban St. Michael and Christ Church.

I want, with those words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to support the Resolution that is before the Honourable Chamber.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I want to make a few bullet points so I do not intend to be long. I wish to support the Resolution, of source, because I think the buses are needed but I believe at this juncture in our history the question has to be asked. Assuming we get these 110 buses, will we then have a sufficient number of vehicles, both in the public sector and in the private sector, to satisfy the travel requirements of the public of Barbados?

We are dealing with an island that is 14 x 21, two hundred and sixty-five thousand people. I wonder if we have asked ourselves that question. We have ZRs, a lot of them. You feel them around you all day. You have ZMs, Bs, BTs, Zs, taxis, endless, and now you have 110 plus whatever else the Transport Board has. Surely we have to ask that question.

Do we have a requisite number, both of buses in the Transport Board system as well as all these other private people? If the answer to that is "yes" and there are still

complaints, then there is a case surely for some groups of persons whether it be the Transport Authority or whether it can be done between the Transport Board, the Ministry of Transport and Works and the Licensing Authority to look at the question of a proper rationalisation of the transport system, a proper deployment of this mass of vehicles which we have which we should be there to deliver to the travelling public.

I am not sure that in all the years that question has been addressed and satisfactorily answered. I think before any transport authority comes on board that some work in this regard should be done toward determining the need or otherwise for a rationalisation of the transport system of Barbados.

I support entirely the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East in respect of the difficulties faced by people in rural Barbados who, I believe, use the Transport Board buses, perhaps to a greater extent than anyone else, but continually suffer the poorest quality of service.

I made a note here. The point made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East bears repetition because the bus coming through Welchman Hall coming from Shorey Village, by the time it gets to Welchman Hall and Sturges it is full.

I do not believe we have ever addressed a situation where you would have a bus between the peak hours, let us say 6 o'clock and 8 o'clock, starting at Sturges or Welchman Hall picking up people and bringing them to town. Later on in the day when that pressure has eased, those buses could be redeployed elsewhere. The same thing can happen on evenings. To get them home you need to put your maximum number of buses at a particular point to get the people out of town and then by 8 o'clock take off the road or redeploy them. I do not know if these things happen but I do not get the impression that they have been considered.

I have been writing letters now for as long as I have been in here, 23 years in Parliament, to try and get a better quality of service for the two rural constituencies that I am representing. I continually get complaints from my constituents.

I wish the Transport Board seriously once they have these buses, in fact, they can start the planning now on the assumption that they are going to get the buses, to address the problems of rural travellers. They are real and most of us are speaking in here on the basis of experience.

Sir, there is a Cabinet subcommittee that has been established to look at the transport difficulties that we are

faced with, in particular any solutions to the problems of traffic congestion. It is a fact that between January 1996 and October last year there were some 13 000 vehicles that came into Barbados. That immediately put pressure on everything, including the roads. There was a time when and your own experience tells you that, four or five years ago you could drive certain roads at night and you would not see a vehicle after ten o'clock; coming across Carmichael or down Constant's long road after ten o'clock it was rare. Now at twelve and one o'clock you have a lot of company. You feel comfortable driving because you pass vehicles all the time. 6.10p.m.

The Cabinet's subcommittee is looking at all of the consequences of this vehicular congestion and we will be making recommendations in due course.

On a different point, it does not affect the buses so much because I do not think that they go through residential developments but residential developments have now become sick of reckless driving. People go through housing areas, for example, new Cane Garden in St. Thomas, Primrose Drive and so on, people go through there at high speeds and that is only one area - but all over the area. We are looking at recommending that one of the first things you can do is to introduce what the Ministry of Transport calls calming devices. Really what they are, are humps in the road to reduce the speed.

A year ago I suggested to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPW) who said that they had two opinions from persons who held this office in previous administrations that is very simple: put up a sign at the entrance to the development saying "Beware or Caution: Humps in the Road" Now when a fellow comes through there at 50 miles an hour and breaks his springs too badly, he has to repair his own vehicle. He cannot blame it on the Ministry of Public Works because there is a sign and the man is warned. That is all you need. All MPW has to do is to get three or four of their painters and tell them to paint a few signs, stick them up and the residents will be happy and will give the land to plant the signs. That is all you need.

We have recommended as a first measure that immediate steps be taken in areas submitted by Members of Parliament. That is the decision. Members of Parliament should submit to the MPW roads where they would like to see these calming devices being put up. After that, one would expect that MPW will get on with the business of actually putting in the humps.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to the deal with the question of indiscipline in this debate because as I said I am going to be short and I will have an opportunity during the

new year. Indiscipline among drivers and persons using the road, I leave as a separate issue. However, I wish to say that it is clear to me that what we need is a stronger attack on indiscipline by way of improved enforcement. Laws exist about noise on vehicles and behaviour of drivers. We need to be able to enforce those laws. The Police Force cannot do it on their own. We have 1250 plus 200 special constables. They cannot do it on their own. The time is going to come when it will be absolutely necessary for the people of this country to pay for proper enforcement. We have to bite the bullet.

MPW needs additional people to operate in the bus stands and all over the country to help enforce the law. There was a time some years ago when some of the inspectors at MPW confessed to fear. They are frightened to approach some of these drivers. If they are afraid they have to be transferred into other areas where they feel comfortable and let us get some people who are man enough to give an order and see that it is carried out, otherwise make sure that that person is dealt with by the law. You are either going to restore law and order and discipline in the transport system or give up. If you do not have the right people with the right attitudes I am sure there are persons out there who are willing to do the job with the attitude.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make two other points. It has been represented to me within the last few weeks that there are problems with the bus service in Brittons Hill and I mean that part of Brittons Hill below Club Morgan. A maid in my Ministry complained that they have no bus service in Brittons Hill on that main road. That is a major area and it would be a major failing if it does not have a bus service. I hope that when they get these buses they can make sure that the people of Brittons Hill get a proper bus.

I also have a complaint about the bus service through Church Village in St. Philip. The complaint is that they are using what my worker tells me are 'short buses'. You cannot use the 'short buses'. The man is my gardener. He is a faithful fellow and I am not complaining about his coming to work. He gets to work early. Last week he mentioned to me that they are using 'short buses' in Church Village when they start from higher up in St. Philip as far as College Savannah. You have a large catchment area so you cannot use small buses up there. Again this is a matter for the proper deployment looking at your catchment area, where the heaviest travelling public is coming from and deploy the type of bus to deal effectively with that.

Finally, Sir, there is something that has bothered me for long. Most mornings, especially if I am going to Home Affairs I pass down Roebuck Street and for as long as 30 years as you drive towards Weymouth and you look across on your left, Sir, you see what I consider to be an eye sore, a large number of abandoned buses. They are not new buses.

They have been there for years. They are out of service and are parked there. The time must be right for us to have some ability now to get rid of these abandoned buses. They are only cluttering up the yard at Weymouth. It looks bad and they are of no value. If you have the parts off them you should be able to get rid of the shells and tidy up that area. It is unsightly.

I do not know what you can do about it but it seems to me that the Ministry of the Environment and the Transport Board have to deal with that. There was a time we talked about dumping them in the sea and then you would have had problems with oil and oil pollution. 6.20 p.m.

There are so many abandoned vehicles about Barbados that I believe that they should all be collected and what can be melted down should be melted down and get rid of them. These abandoned vehicles throughout Barbados are defacing this island. I say we should start with the Transport Board because that is a quasi-governmental authority. Let us set an example and clean up that area and get rid of the eye sore.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH: Let me first of all begin, Sir, by giving my compliments to the Minister. I do not believe that having 100 buses more for the Transport Board is going to make any substantial difference to the level of service that is now given by the Board. Obviously our bus system is better than most other territories in the Caribbean but there are too many issues facing the entire transport system in Barbados that needs to be dealt with, which, in my opinion, are not being dealt with in a very serious and expeditious way. Let me echo the sentiments of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph when he spoke about the increase in vehicular traffic because that obviously signals some increase in material prosperity. However, I know the Prime Minister had said some years ago that having a car in every carport was something that was desirable for Barbados. I do not think that there is anyone that would want to dispute that because most people are driving while other people are catching*the bus. However, Sir, there is a need to seriously rationalize whether or not we are meeting the total transport needs of the country. I want to ask a few questions.

I have had an opportunity to actually read some part of the transport study that was done some years ago. The number of ZRs, minibuses and Transport Board buses in total in system, are they truly meeting the needs of the travelling public in Barbados? Have we exhausted all of the options regarding how we can deal with the transport situation? There is a sign on the back of most Transport Board buses that says: How is my driving? There is also a telephone number attached to it. I cannot remember the

number but I had an opportunity to test this number and I must have been sent to about three different extensions and ten different phone lines by the time the call was over. Finally, someone told me that they did not even know what I was talking about.

Sir, I am asking, when are we going to deal with some of the serious problems that we have? First of all, why are our bus stands still war zones? We have bus stands in this country that people are fearful of going into. We have a system in which a lot of our school children are riding on minibuses when that should be taken care of, in my opinion, mostly by the Government's transport system. I know that the Minister of Education spoke a lot about children and she said that sooner or later we will have a transport system to deal with children but if we started out by sending children to the school closest to where they live, it would eliminate this open option that continues to breed this Harrison's culture in Barbados. I think we would solve a lot of the problems that we have. As far as I am concerned, children need to start going to the schools closest to where they live and we will eliminate many of the problems of children having to travel on ZR vans in this country.

Sir, I want to say that not only rural Barbados has problems in terms of having buses or not having their needs met through the Transport Board. In urban Barbados we have some distinct problems as well. There are areas, and these are not areas like behind the Bim Factory which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke, these are main roads in urban Barbados, in some urban constituencies where the transport needs are not being met. Some older people will get onto a ZR van and as you know, it is not subsidized either so they are not going to ride on any ZR van. Here is a perfect example. The entire area of Beckles Road which cuts the two areas of the Bayland in half, that road goes right up to Brittons Hill and all the way up to Rendezvous and no Transport Board bus passes there.

There was a time when there was a smaller Transport Board bus plying that route but it has been removed. Since then we have written to ask for a bus to travel on that Beckles Road strip, up to Brittons Hill and up to Rendezvous because it can aid substantially in helping a lot of old people who live in that part of Brittons Hill and the densely popular areas in urban Barbados which are not met adequately by the transport system nor by the ZR system. The Member for St. Michael North East talked about people having to get off the bus with big bags and walk into areas, but we are not asking them to go off the route. These are main areas where they can travel and Beckles Road is one of those areas.

Sir, regarding the Transport Board and how it actually goes about marketing its systems to the public. Have we examined all of the options? Obviously there is a need to rationalise how many ZR vans are needed; how many

Transport Board buses are needed and how many 'B' buses are needed. I have seen very few public service announcements which are focussed on how the Transport Board system can be used. Although you do not want to throw off small entrepreneurs who have started up transport systems in urban and suburban Barbados, what you really want to do is to market the system. I have seen very little marketing coming out of the Transport Board regarding the safety of the system, the cleanliness of the system and how the system is superior to the other systems. There are many options opened to the Transport Board for them to be able to raise the standard. Not only raise the standard but to sell that standard to Barbados in a very positive way. Sir, there is also a need to regulate the private concessionaires in a way that brings fairness to all of them. One of the biggest problems we have is the intense competition. There must be a way in which the Government can create a system in which a lot of these people are into one concession. In which all of them can easily be paid from the same system rather than having them in a constant to and fro every day, creating havoc on the road that is not safe for anyone in Barbados and creating a system in which they are not being paid fairly. That must be one of the biggest concerns of the Transport Board and the Government, how it can be changed.

The Minister spoke about 15 air-conditioned buses that are coming for tourism. That is one of the things that I would like clarified. I would like to know how they are going to integrate a system which is primarily a private sector system. I want to know how these buses are going to be utilised in the system. I would like the Minister, in closing, to clarify for me exactly how the buses will be utilised. I would be more than grateful.

We talked about shuttle services and tiered systems in terms of the fare structures but most of the buses owned by private concessionaires are having distinct problems with insurance. There are people in my constituency who are ZR van owners who cannot get their ZRs insured. As far as I am concerned, it is something that we need to deal with and deal with it expeditiously.

I take the Honourable Member for St. Joseph's point that we need to look at having a comprehensive debate in Parliament regarding the transport system in Barbados because there are a lot of other problems. You cannot drive a car in Barbados anymore but in your own driveway because there is no where to drive. Peak hours, off peak hours or nights there is congestion on the road. I understand that Highway 2A was supposed to be more than the two lanes that exist and it obviously needs to be expanded. We need to be able to create more than lanes on that highway. I have heard people say that if there are four lanes that eventually there will be a bottleneck at one particular point and that the problem will still exist. As far as I am

concerned, that is not true. If the traffic is flowing differently and freer there will not be bottlenecks in certain places. There are things in Barbados that can be experimented with like car-pooling and staggered hours which the Ministry of Transport and Works can suggest. I am not sure that we have exhausted all the options regarding how we can create a better transport system in Barbados. 6.30 p.m.

I lived in Puerto Rico for a while and there was a system on the highways where a bus lane was created on the roads in which the bus ran against the grain of traffic. The traffic is going one way and the bus runs in the other direction. That was to ease the public transport buses out of the congestion which was obtained every day in terms of going bumper to bumper behind cars.

These are some of the options that are available and I know the Transport Board addressed some things, but I would like to know, Sir, when are we going to experiment with other options available? When are we going to encourage people in Barbados to leave their cars at home and take public transportation? When are we going to encourage car pooling? When is the Transport Board going to advertise its services better than it is advertising them now? There are many things that the Transport Board needs to do and I look forward to having a debate. It is not only rural Barbados that is confronted with the serious problem, there are areas in urban Barbados that need to be addressed where the Transport Board needs to put systems in and to look at them very seriously.

I thank you.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to wrap up this debate on this Resolution. I first want to answer the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I do not know of any buses in the Transport Board that within a week of coming on the road had problems with the transmissions. I would also want to say that by this weekend a delegation will be going to Brazil to look at the phototype we are having for our buses. I know the Transport Board has over the years bought new buses and not reconditioned buses. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy also spoke of second hand tyres and none of that has been known to me.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph in his contribution made some good points. He talked about a service for rural Barbados and I too support that. That is why I believe strongly in one of the points he made in the question of the future of the Transport Board. I strongly believe that there should always be a Government owned Transport Board that is going to give a service to the people of Barbados. Many of the private service vehicles do not render that service to our people. Sometimes when the rain

sets up and the clouds are too black, they figure it is time to go home. The Government owned Transport Board will operate whether it rains or the sun shines.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South asked about the air-conditioned buses. I said in my presentation that we have 50 air-conditioned buses coming. At this present moment the Transport Board has an arrangement to transport people/tourist from the airport and the seaport. Those air-conditioned buses will be used in that area. Mention was also made about the insurance. We do not control the insurance of Government vehicles, but I can say that people look for the best rates available for any type of insurance they need. They do not want to expose themselves to too much risk and if something out there is of too much risk, they are going to refuse it.

There was mention also about the bottlenecks on the highway at the roundabouts. There are two roundabouts in Barbados on the ABC Highway where a lot of problems exist. There are the Bussa Roundabout and the roundabout by the Life of Barbados Limited. There are plans underway in the Ministry to have a two-lane traffic starting from the Warrens Roundabout continuing on to the Life of Barbados Limited Roundabout. For example, on approaching the roundabout there will be two lanes going through. When you pass Julie'N and you get to the Bussa Roundabout, if you are in the left lane, you will go straight through. If you are in the right lane, you can either go straight through or make a right and go pass by Ilaro Court. That will be existing on the Highway between Warrens and the Life of Barbados Roundabout, because as I said earlier, those two roundabouts are the ones where we seem to get a lot of trouble and bottlenecks.

There are many problems existing at the Transport Board and we are looking at areas to alleviate those problems. There are many problems and everyone here making their contributions today, I would like them to know that their comments have not fallen on deaf ears. I gladly accept their contributions but I do not want to say too much more about the plans that are being made for the Transport Board. At sometime soon we will be coming with measures where a big debate will ensue in here on the Transport Board.

I want to thank all Honourable Members for their contributions and with that I ask that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that concludes Government business for today. I wish to compliment all Honourable Members who have participated in this debate. We have completed a lot of business. I also beg to move that this House be now adjourned until December 14, 1999 at 11.00 a.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, December 14, 1999 at 11.00 a.m. was put and was resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 6.40 p.m.

CONTENTS

ABSENCE OF SPEAKER

Mr. Deputy Clerk announced the absence of His Honour the Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

MINUTES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, November 23, 1999.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR.....

1. The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) Order, 1999.
2. The Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order, 1999.
3. The Civil Establishment (Part-time Officers) Order, 1999.
4. The Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 1999.
5. Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 1999.
6. The Ombudsman (Salary) Order, 1999.
7. Parliament (Administration) (Salaries) Order, 1999.
8. The Judges (Salaries) Order, 1999.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE 2

1. Annual Report of the Department of Labour for the year 1999.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Finance for the payment of principal and interest in respect of a loan to the Transport Board of US \$15 million.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS

2

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. 4 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1999 2

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 2, 27; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 22; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 15; Hon. R. R. Farley, 26.

ORDER NO. 5 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (PART-TIME OFFICERS) ORDER, 1999 28

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 28.

ORDER NO. 6 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (TEACHERS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1999 29

ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE RATES OF SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES FOR VARIOUS POSTS IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE 29

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 29.

ORDER NO. 8 - RESOLUTION TO AMEND SECTION 3(2) OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL (CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) ACT, CAP. 6 29

ORDER NO. 9 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PAYMENT OF INCREASED WAGES OF PUBLIC AND CASUAL EMPLOYEES 29

ORDER NO. 10 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PAYMENT OF INCREASED EMOLUMENTS TO PERSONAL

ASSISTANTS TO MINISTERS	29
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