

# THE

# House of Assembly Debates

## (OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 - 2004

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### HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Tuesday, February 16, 1999*

Pursuant to the Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir Clifford Straughn Husbands, the first Meeting of the House of Assembly of the Parliament of 1999-2004 convened at 4.00 p.m at Parliament Buildings, Bridgetown on Tuesday, February 16, 1999.

Pursuant to the issuing of Writs, the Honourable Members elected to constitute the General Assembly for the Session assembled in the Assembly Chambers are as follows:

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.B.  
(Christ Church West)

Rt. Hon. Owen Seymour ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.)  
(St. Peter)

Hon. David Anthony Cathcart SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (St. Thomas)

Mr. David John Howard THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.)  
(St. John)

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B.  
(Christ Church South)

Mr. Louis Randall TULL, Q.C., M.A. (St. George South)

Hon. Dr. Richard Lionel CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., (St. Joseph)

Hon. Miss Billie Antoinette MILLER (City of Bridgetown)

Hon. George Walton PAYNE (St. Andrew)

Hon. Rawle Cyprian EASTMOND, B.A., LL.B. (Hons.) L.E.C. (St. James North)

Mr. Duncan CARTER (Christ Church East Central)

Hon. Rudolph Nathaniel GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B., (St. Philip North)

Mr. Ishmael Alphonsa ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed. (St Michael Central)

Hon. Gline Arley CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed, (St. George North)

Mr. Joseph Matthew EDGHILL, J.P. (Christ Church West Central)

Mr. Rommell Delano MARSHALL (St. Michael West Central)

Mr. Hamilton Fitzgerald LASHLEY (St. Michael South East)

Hon. Ronald St.Clair TOPPIN, LL.B. (St. Michael North)

Mr. Denis St. Elmo KELLMAN (St. Lucy)

Hon. Miss Henrietta Elizabeth THOMPSON, LL.B. (St. James South)

Hon. Miss Mia Amor MOTTLEY, LL.B. (St. Michael North East)

Mr. Mark Zachariah WILLIAMS (St. Michael North West)

Mr. Trevor Anthony PRESCOD (St. Michael East)

Rev. Joseph Junior Sylvester ATHERLEY, (St. Michael West)

Mr. David Theobald GILL (St. Michael South Central)

Mr. Noel Anderson LYNCH (St. Michael South)

Hon. Anthony Patrick WOOD, (St. Philip South)

Hon. Reginald Richardo FARLEY, (Christ Church East)

*The Clerk of Parliament read the following Proclamation:*

"By His Excellency Sir Clifford Straughn Husbands, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight of St. Andrew, Governor General of Barbados.

C. S. HUSBANDS  
GOVERNOR-GENERAL

February 16, 1999

## A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS it is provided by section 60(1) of the Constitution that each session of Parliament shall be held at such place and commence at such time as the Governor-General may appoint:

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that a session of Parliament should be held at the Parliament Buildings, Bridgetown, commencing on Tuesday, February 16, 1999:

NOW THEREFORE by virtue and in exercise of the power and authority in me vested, I, Sir Clifford Straughn Husbands, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight of St. Andrew, Governor-General of Barbados, DO HEREBY APPOINT the Parliament Buildings, Bridgetown, as the place at which a session of Parliament shall be held at 16.00 hours in the afternoon on Tuesday, February 16, 1999, as the time at which the said session shall commence.

Given under my hand and the Public Seal of Barbados this 5th day of February, 1999, and in the Forty-seventh Year of Her Majesty's Reign.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER

THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT: I am to announce to Honourable Members that I have received a letter from the Private Secretary to the Governor-General in the name of His Excellency the Governor-General stating:

"Government House  
Barbados  
12 February, 1999.

Dear Mr. Brancker:

I am directed to forward herewith two copies of the Proclamation which has been issued by His Excellency, the Governor-General, appointing Tuesday, February 16, 1999 at 16:00 hours as the time at which the first session of the new Parliament shall be held.

I am further to inform you that it is His Excellency's desire that the House should elect a Speaker at the beginning of that Session at 16:00 hours and before it proceeds to the dispatch of any other business, under the provisions of Order 2(1) of the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly. I am directed to request you to inform the Members of the House of Assembly accordingly.

Yours faithfully,

P. LAYNE,  
Private Secretary to His Excellency,  
The Governor-General."

According to Standing Order 2(1) a Member, having first ascertained that the Member to be proposed is willing to serve if elected may, rising in his place and addressing himself to the Clerk, propose that any other Member do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

Is there a proposal for that Honourable Office?

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Clerk, I have the honour to propose the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central to be the Speaker of this Honourable House of Assembly.

Mr. CLERK: Is there a seconder for the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central to be Speaker of this Honourable House?

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Clerk of Parliament, I have the honour to second the proposal for the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central for the post as Speaker of this Chamber.

Mr. CLERK: Is there any other proposal for the office of the Speaker of this Honourable House? If there are no others, I declare that the Honourable Member for the constituency of St. Michael Central should be called by this House to the Chair without any question being put.

*Mr. SPEAKER was called to the Chair without the question being put.*

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for re-electing me as your Speaker. I assure you that I will at all times be fair and impartial in conducting the business of this Honourable Chamber. While the cut and thrust of debate is to be encouraged, I sincerely hope that all Honourable Members recognise it as their duty also, the maintenance of order and discipline in our House.

I assure all Members that irrespective of the division of numbers, all Members will be entitled to fairness and justice governed by our Standing Orders. Our House will be conducted with the dignity, decorum and observance of the rule of law. Once again, I thank you and look forward to working with you.

We will now proceed to the election of a Deputy Speaker. Are there any nominations?

## ELECTION OF A DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central be

elected as the Deputy Speaker of this the Honourable House of Assembly for this session.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to second the nomination of the Member for Christ Church West Central for the post of Deputy Speaker of this most Honourable Chamber. I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no other nominations, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central is duly elected Deputy Speaker.

We will now proceed to the election of Chairman of Committees.

#### ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have the honour to move that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central be the Chairman of Committees for this session.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to second the proposal for the Member for Christ Church East Central as the Chairman of Committees of this most Honourable Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no other nominations, I duly declare the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central as the Chairman of Committees.

We will now proceed to the Election of House Committees.

#### ELECTION OF MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the following Honourable Members constitute the Management Commission of Parliament:

Your Honour as the Chairman; the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Member for St. Peter; the Honourable Member for St. Thomas; the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and Member for St. John; the Honourable Member for St. Joseph; the Honourable Member for the City; the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and; the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Those, Mr. Speaker, are the proposals from this Honourable House of Assembly.

Mr. SPEAKER: If this be the will of the House that these Members serve on this Committee, then so be it. 4.20 p.m.

#### COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to propose the following Members to be Members of the Committee of Privileges:

Your Honour as Chairman; The Honourable Member for Christ Church West; The Honourable Member for St. James North; The Honourable Member for St. Michael West; The Honourable Member for St. Philip North; The Honourable Member for St. John and The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If this be the will of the House, then the Members so named constitute that Committee also.

#### THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the following be the Members of the Committee of Public Accounts:

The Honourable Member for St. John as Chairman; The Honourable Member for St. Lucy; The Honourable Member for St. Michael East; The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central; The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West; The Honourable Member for Christ Church East and; The Honourable Member for St. George South.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If this be the will of the House that the Members so named constitute that Committee, then so be it.

#### STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the following be the Members of the Standing Orders Committee:

Your Honour as Chairman; The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East; The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central; The Honourable Member for St. Andrew; The Honourable Member for Christ Church South; The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central; The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central; The Honourable Member for St. Philip South; The Honourable Member for St. John and; The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

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

February 16, 1999

Mr. SPEAKER: If this be the will of the House that the Honourable Members so named constitute that Committee then so be it.

MEMBERS OF THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE  
(A JOINT COMMITTEE)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following be the Members of The Honourable The House of Assembly for The Library Committee:

Your Honour as Chairman; The Honourable Member for St. James South; The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East; The Honourable Member for St. Michael North; The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East; The Honourable Member for St. George North; The Honourable Member for St. John and; The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If this be the will of the House that the Honourable Members so named constitute that Committee; then so be it.

PAPERS

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

1. The Barbados Labour Party Manifesto 1999.
2. Report Audit of the Accounts of the Severance Payment Scheme 1995 to 1997.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Report of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council for the period April 1, 1997 to March 31, 1998.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of:

1. The Criminal Records (Rehabilitation of Offenders) (Amendment) Bill, 1999.
2. The Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 1999.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have gotten through the first part of our business with reasonable dispatch and I beg to move that this Honourable House be now suspended for five minutes.

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

*The question -was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.*

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

We are awaiting the pleasure of His Excellency The Governor-General.

*The Sergeant-at-Arms entered the Chamber and announced to the House the command of His Excellency the Governor-General of their presence in the Senate Chamber.*

*Mr. SPEAKER ELECT preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms and Deputy Marshal bearing the Mace, and all other Members of the House in order of seniority accompanied by the Chaplain and the Clerks proceeded to the Senate Chamber in accordance with His Excellency's Summons.*

*His Excellency approved the election of Mr. SPEAKER and granted his request on behalf of the House of Assembly for their ancient rights and privileges.*

*His Excellency then delivered the following address:*

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR-  
GENERAL AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT  
FEBRUARY 16, 1999

Mr. President and Members of the Senate,

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

This new session of Parliament commenced earlier this evening, and each of your Houses has elected its presiding officer.

This Parliament will assume an historic significance in our nation's affairs since this new session will straddle the closing of one century, and the beginning of another.

With this .fully in mind, and in keeping with time honoured tradition, it now falls to me to outline my Government's programme for the Parliamentary term.

NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

My Government is committed to the continued and full development of our society as a well ordered, stable and

prosperous democracy governed by the rule of law and resting on the participation of all sectors, classes and creeds.

It commits itself to ensuring that our development, at all times, takes place within the context of social and economic justice, such that our material development translates into improved and expanded economic and social opportunities for all.

On the threshold of a new century my Government envisages the transformation of Barbados into a fully developed economy, endowed with the production capacity to provide for the full employment of its citizens, capable of sustaining a high and constantly improving standard of living for its people, and providing the means to eradicate poverty within the shortest time possible.

### FOREIGN POLICY

Our continued survival and prosperity as a nation will depend in large measure on our ability to adapt to the new realities in international relations.

To this end, my Government will give immediate priority to the reorganisation and reorientation of the Foreign Service and the rationalisation of its diplomatic representation overseas. It will expand the recently established Permanent Mission in Geneva and equip it with the specialist skills necessary to handle the complex issues before the World Trade Organisation.

Foreign Trade activities will become an integral component of my Government's diplomatic effort. Particular attention will be paid to the promotion of Barbados' economic and strategic interests in the negotiation of a successor agreement to the LOME IV Convention between the ACP and the European Union. Barbados will also accord high priority to the negotiations towards the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Americas by the Year 2005.

My Government will give special emphasis to the promotion of a close and mutually beneficial association between Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. Barbados remains committed to the deepening of the regional integration process and, in accordance with the mandate given to its Head of Government, will continue to play an active role in the development of the Single Market and Economy.

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Barbados will exert leadership on Small States issues, and will assist in the effort to focus the attention of major International Financial and Trade Institutions on the need for new policies to accommodate the peculiar vulnerabilities of small economies. At the 1999 Review Conference on Small

Island Developing States my Government will promote the full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and will work to secure support for the international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Specially Protected Area in the context of Sustainable Development.

In seeking to reposition Barbados in international affairs, my Government will increase its efforts to develop substantive cultural and economic relations with Africa. It will pursue highly focussed trade links with the Asia-Pacific region, and will consolidate its existing ties with Europe through the establishment of a consular presence in Berlin. It will also seek to upgrade its representation in Latin America, with particular emphasis on Mercosur and the Southern Zone countries.

### ECONOMIC PROGRAMME AND POLICIES

Against the backdrop of a radically transforming global economy, my Government will institute measures to achieve strong and sustainable economic growth.

My Government accepts that the chief and highest purpose of such economic growth must be to bring about the full employment of our citizens and to create the conditions for the eradication of poverty.

My Government will create the conditions for the sustained and sustainable growth of the Barbadian economy, principally by accelerating our nation's transformation into a high quality export service economy, with a fully developed tourism and hospitality industry as its chief engine of growth.

My Government will also pursue an economic programme to make Barbados a premier International Financial and Business Centre in our Hemisphere.

My Government also recognises that manufacturing and agriculture have important and continuing roles to play as major sources of foreign exchange and employment, but that in the new international economic environment these sectors will face special and new competitive challenges.

My Government is therefore committed to providing these two strategic sectors with new incentives and financial supports to equip them to continue to be major forces in the continuing development of the Barbados' economy.

My Government recognises that the realisation of the potential for the growth and development of the Barbados' economy requires the creation of the conditions to support high and increasing levels of private investment and the realisation of fair and reasonable returns on such investment.

It commits itself to the creation of these conditions.

My Government is committed to the development of a vibrant and thriving small business sector, and the creation of new economic opportunities for cultural and craft industries.

My Government will therefore carry out an Economic Affirmative Action Programme for small businesses to ensure that they get an expanding share of Government contracts.

My Government will also replenish the resources of the Barbados Agency for Micro Enterprise Development (Fund Access) and the Enterprise Growth Fund, which together will provide much of the financing needed by small and micro businesses in Barbados.

It will enact special legislation which will incorporate a new fiscal regime for the development of small businesses.

My Government will create additional vending capacity in the public markets and at strategic points along highways, on tour bus routes, on popular beaches and at other tourism sites.

It is recognised that a well developed and ordered capital market is an essential aspect in Barbados' development. My Government will therefore continue to provide attractive incentives to promote savings and investments, will introduce new Securities Legislation, create an Independent Securities Commission, and make the trading of Government paper attractive on the Securities Exchange.

My Government is committed to selling shares in its corporations and limited liability companies under such terms and conditions as to afford a broader cross section of the Barbadian public the opportunity to acquire a deeper stake in the development of our society.

It also acknowledges that our continued economic progress requires the pursuit of sound economic and financial policies which engender conditions of stability.

My Government will therefore incur very small fiscal deficits; will refrain from printing money to finance Government's operations; will continue to rely on a low interest rate regime as a principal factor in our stability; will set the price of energy products at the lowest possible levels, consistent with world market prices; will implement policies to contain inflation at the lowest possible level; will pursue

policies to systematically boost our foreign exchange reserves; and will not devalue the Barbados dollar.

It especially recognises that the conditions for continued economic stability and development in Barbados require that wage and income settlements must be related to the capacity of an enterprise to pay, must take into account productivity and must be so factored as to promote the international competitiveness of the Barbados' economy.

My Government is committed to working with the social partners to establish and perpetuate such conditions.

## TAXATION

My Government will progressively expand the concessions for savings, mortgage interest, home improvements and for other household purposes.

It will, in each year, continue to provide an income tax refund to those below the income threshold at which income tax is payable.

My Government will, by progressive steps, increase the income tax threshold from the present level of \$15,000 to \$25,000.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

My Government recognises that continuing efforts must be made to ensure the future solvency of the National Insurance Scheme, and it will institute the necessary measures.

It will also implement policies to make it possible and attractive for persons to supplement their savings for retirement beyond those accumulated in the National Insurance Scheme.

## LAND TAX AND RELATED MATTERS

In line with the report of the Parliamentary Subcommittee established on the taxation of land and related matters, my Government will restructure the land tax and property transfer tax regimes and introduce new arrangements to govern the ownership and sale of land in Barbados.

## VALUE ADDED TAX

My Government will continue to refine the administration and, where appropriate, reduce the incidence of the Value Added Tax to ensure that it does not represent a hardship to households or enterprises.

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## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Barbados currently has one of the best educational systems in the hemisphere. Despite this, our educational system has been falling short in meeting the needs of both the economy and the individual citizen.

Without losing sight of fundamental values as a people, we must radically reform the system to facilitate the development of every child, to address the social and economic needs of the country and to build the sense of responsibility of each individual to self, family, community and country. This reform programme has been commonly referred to as EduTech 2000.

Having secured the financing for this programme, my government is now ready to implement its constituent elements. Rehabilitation of schools, new programmes for teacher training, the introduction of information and communication technology as a tool of instruction, curriculum reform, the reform of the Common Entrance Examination and the introduction of a new modular system of national certification will all be undertaken over the next five years.

My Government is also committed to reinforcing the basics within our educational system which have served us so well. The increased involvement of parents will also be vigorously pursued in the expansion of the Parent Volunteer Programme in Early Childhood Education and a Parent Education Programme.

Our young people have tremendous talent in the areas of sports and culture. However, there has not been a focal institution at the secondary level to harness these talents and develop them in a disciplined environment. My Government will therefore move to establish an Academy of Excellence in Culture and Sports to provide a four-year programme for students showing a distinct proficiency in these areas.

My Government recognises the importance of the teacher to ensuring that the education system functions in an optimal way. Matters attendant to the personnel concerns as well as the professional certification of teachers must also be central to creating the correct environment. Accordingly, a Teachers Service Commission and a system of teacher appraisal will be introduced.

At the tertiary level, my government remains committed to paying the tuition fees of all Barbadians attending post secondary institutions of the University of the West Indies. It will also implement policies to ensure the continued expansion of numbers and programmes at these institutions.

My Government will remove, by progressive steps, the existing caps on the training of Barbadians at tertiary level institutions, so that every Barbadian can enjoy the benefits of training and education commensurate with his or her talents.

Finally, the commitment of the CARICOM Heads of Government to allow freedom of movement of skilled persons within the region will require that a Board of Certification, Accreditation and Articulation be urgently established.

In the area of vocational training, my government will continue to revolutionise most areas by removing practical training from the classroom to work-site operations. The range of vocational training will also be expanded. It is committed to the close collaboration between the agencies responsible for training and the private sector.

Since its creation in 1995, the Division of Youth Affairs has developed and expanded its resource capacity and research capability to respond to the challenges facing our young people in Barbados. My Government will now expand the range and nature of its programming to meet the needs identified by the young people themselves.

Accordingly, we will expand the residential component of the Barbados Youth Service and introduce a non-residential aspect. International Exchange programmes will also be pursued.

## TRAINING

My Government will continue to place the highest premium on human resource development. The Training Administration Division, the Barbados Vocational Training Board and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council will be provided with expanded resources to ensure that this country's social capital is developed to meet the challenges of our changing environment. The programmes which will be developed and implemented by these institutions will be aided by labour market information systems.

## CULTURE

My Government will pursue cultural policies that are designed to foster a sense of pride in its citizens and to develop the self-worth and self-confidence of the nation.

It is fully committed to the preservation and protection of Barbados' cultural heritage and will establish a National Heroes Gallery, and the Kamau Brathwaite Institute of African Studies at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, and will create a national framework for the development of all aspects of the performing and fine arts.

My Government appreciates the enormous economic potential of culture and cultural industries. It will therefore continue to give support to the expansion of business opportunities in cultural goods and services and implement policies to protect our strategic interests.

The services of the National Library Service and the Archives Department will be rationalised and expanded to enhance the level of their efficiency.

## HEALTH

The quality of life and the preservation of our economic base can only be secured by the protection of our citizens' health.

The Barbadian health care system is in the throes of change. There is no doubt that it must be made flexible and must adapt to rapidly changing technology, increased public expectations and rising costs.

Against this background, my Government is committed to a fundamental rationalisation of the services within this sector.

In particular, it will carry out measures to enable the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to deliver health care of the highest quality by using best practices, applying cost-effective measures, and making patient care its number one priority, in line with the recommendations of the Report of the Haynes Advisory Commission into the affairs of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

My Government will also embark on the first major physical expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in 40 years. A Patient's Rights Charter will establish patient care and rights at the centre of care delivery and administration. My Government will create an autonomous management structure for the Hospital in line with the recommendations of the Haynes Commission Report.

My Government will also review the role of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a teaching hospital and lift the cap on medical training.

Nurses constitute the largest single group of health care workers. To this end, my Government will develop a career path for nurses with the appropriate recognition and remuneration. A post of full time Registrar for the General Nursing Council will also be established.

The first line of defence in an effective health care policy is a strong public health programme. My Government

will restructure the Public Health Inspectorate in accordance with the recommendations of that body. In addition, the Health Services Act and Regulations will be upgraded to strengthen the powers of the Health Inspectors to deal with issues relating to food quality, derelict vehicles, abandoned houses and overgrown lots. The Sanitation Services Authority (SSA) will be restructured, and a new fleet of vehicles will also be purchased to improve the quality of its service.

The opening hours of polyclinics have recently been extended. My Government will make provision for at least one polyclinic to be open on a twenty-four hour basis. My Government will enact new Mental Health legislation and will encourage a greater community approach to the provision of mental health care. The physical plant of the Psychiatric Hospital will also be refurbished.

## SOLID WASTE

My Government will fully implement the extensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Programme which was defined as a major component of the general policy of the Health Sector Development Plan 1993-2000.

Both the National Sanitary Landfill at Greenland and the Bulky Waste Facility at Bagatelle have already been completed and will soon be fully operational.

To complement these facilities, my Government will shortly be constructing a Transfer Station and a Composting Facility at Vacluse, St. Thomas.

The other components of this programme will involve the enactment of new legislation to support these policy initiatives, to control illegal dumping and to support recycling.

## ENVIRONMENT

There is now general acceptance that we must take special care of our physical environment. My Government will implement a Beautify Barbados 2000 programme to enhance the island's highways and landscapes, and especially to convert the 300 gullies of Barbados into assets available for the recreation of our citizens and our visitors after the model of the Welchman Hall Gully. It will also create protection regimes and management practices for heritage areas such as Harrison's Cave, Folkstone Park, Turners Hall Woods, Graeme Hall Swamp and Carlisle Bay and our natural wetlands.

My Government will ensure that our beaches are accessible to all and that they never become the exclusive preserve of any sector in the community.

vehicular traffic. The ABC Highway will be expanded to a four lane Highway. Over 30 kilometers of major roads and highways will be established, and to improve the flow of traffic, overpasses will be introduced on the ABC Highway.

Government will support the programme to upgrade our public transport system. An additional one hundred new buses will be acquired to expand the fleet of the Transport Board. To facilitate the proper regulation of the entire public transport system, an independent Transport Authority will be established.

My Government will fully integrate the operations of minibuses, route taxis and the Transport Board fleet to produce a fair and equitable system.

In respect of drainage my Government will intensify the operations of the new Drainage Unit to reduce the incidence of flooding in Barbados.

My Government will also implement corrective measures up-stream of such flood-prone areas as Speightstown, Holetown, Weston, Headley's Land, Murphy Pasture, Barnes Land and Harts Gap.

## SPORTS

My Government will institute policies to ensure that all communities in Barbados be provided with sports facilities and the means to have those facilities fully and effectively utilised.

My Government will also continue its support to sporting organisations and will, in particular, institute special measures to facilitate the growing and successful participation of our young people in international competitions.

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND LABOUR

In its previous term of office, my Government successfully negotiated and implemented a social contract between the social partners representing the State, Labour and Capital as an essential mechanism for the attainment of social progress and economic stability.

It will honour its obligations under the existing Social Contract and conclude other similar arrangements that will deepen and enhance the consultative and decision-making process.

In addition, a national Minimum Wage will be introduced in an effort to ensure a proper standard of living for all working Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, during the years of structural adjustment of the economy, workers in the public sector shouldered a unique and unequal burden. In recognition of such sacrifice, my Government will fully restore to all workers in the public sector, the emoluments lost by reason of the operation of the REDUCTION OF EMOLUMENTS ACT. Negotiations with the social partners will shortly commence to agree on the terms of compensation.

A Trade Union Recognition Bill, an Unfair Dismissal Bill and an Occupational Health and Safety Bill will be enacted.

## PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

My Government acknowledges that Public Sector Reform is an ongoing process in which the ultimate goal is timeliness and efficiency in the delivery of goods and services to the public and the transformation of the public sector of Barbados into a meritocracy. The programme for Reform will be continued and expanded to embrace the concepts of the Customer Charter and Value for Money Accountability.

A new and reformed Human Resources Management System will be implemented which will involve computerisation of all records, and implementation of new procedures relating to recruitment, programme appraisal and appointment.

My Government will also enact a new Public Service Act to provide a less complex but more effective framework within which the Barbados public service of the future will be managed.

## THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

My Government accepts its overriding responsibility to ensure that Barbados remains a safe society for residents and visitors alike.

In pursuance of that mission, Government's approach to the problems of crime and deviance will be predicated upon a multi-dimensional strategy. The main elements of the strategy will involve a continuing scientific analysis of criminality, the amelioration of those social and economic factors which may conduce to criminality, improving the equipment and the terms and conditions of service of the men and women of the Royal Barbados Police Force, modernising the judicial system and continuing reform of the penal system.

Specifically, the work of the Task Force on Crime Prevention will be expanded.

The Royal Barbados Police Force will accelerate its programme of community policing. Renovations of existing police stations will continue and new stations will be constructed in St. Thomas, St. Peter, St. Joseph and St. Andrew.

So far as the judicial system is concerned, my Government will construct a new Judicial Centre and complete the computerisation of the judicial system.

A new department of Correctional Services, incorporating an expanded Probation Service, will be established to provide the necessary administrative support for the recently enacted Penal System Reform Act.

My Government with the assistance of an international financial institution will develop a Young Offenders' Institution and is committed to launch this year, a programme to assist in the rehabilitation of former prisoners.

Work is currently in progress to establish a scheme to compensate victims of violent crime. My Government will implement such a scheme during this new session of Parliament.

### ILLEGAL DRUGS

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, the world phenomenon of illegal narcotic drugs poses the greatest threat to our civil society. My Government has had significant success over the past year in reducing the supply of narcotic substances into our country. It remains committed to intensifying the fight against these substances on all fronts. But particularly, and in accordance with the Political Declaration of the United Nations at its Special Session of June 1998, my Government will increase its emphasis on demand reduction and rehabilitation.

### CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

After the widest possible consultations with Barbadians at home and abroad, the Constitution Review Commission submitted its Report to me on December 15, 1998.

Its recommendations are far-reaching and fundamental to the future governance of Barbados. Before enactment of the legislation necessary to reform the Constitution, opportunity will be afforded to Barbadians to discuss the several recommendations of the Commission, thereby deepening and widening the concept of participatory democracy in a meaningful way.

However, I must advise that my Government notes and accepts the findings of the Commission that its consultations

revealed a national consensus for Barbados' transformation to a Republic within the Commonwealth, with an indigenous citizen as Head of State.

Nevertheless, in all the circumstances, my Government will proceed with all deliberate speed to enact a new CONSTITUTION BILL reflecting the views and recommendations of the Commission itself, the people, the Cabinet and the Parliament of Barbados.

### LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME

During the course of the next session, my Government intends to enact a wide range of legislation to provide the statutory infrastructure that is fundamental to the proper functioning of a modern Barbados.

Thus, very early in its term, Government will introduce into Parliament, Bills providing for the recognition of Trade Unions, Unfair Dismissal from employment, and an Occupational Safety and Health Bill.

New and major legislation will underpin small business development, tourism development, agricultural development, postal service reorganisation, consumer protection, education and the protection of our heritage. The Public Utilities Act will be repealed and replaced by legislation establishing a Fair Trading Commission. The securities and capital market will benefit from the promulgation of new Securities legislation, a new Take Over Code and the enactment of a Bankruptcy and Insolvency Bill.

My Government also proposes to establish a Transport Authority, rationalise the laws relating to pensions and the public service and enact anti-litter and noise pollution legislation. New Town and Country Planning legislation will also be enacted. During this calendar year, new Copyright Rules, Bail Rules and Magistrates Court Rules will be made.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, ever since November 1993, the will of the Government and people of Barbados - indeed, the will of the Governments and people of the Caribbean generally - has been frustrated by decisions of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which have had the effect of preventing the use of the death penalty as a punishment legally and constitutionally imposed by the State. The rule of law which is the foundation upon which civil society is organised and regulated is being imperiled by judicial decisions in England. It cannot continue.

Having regard to the composition of this Parliament and with a view to giving fullest expression to the will of the Government and people of Barbados, my Government without prejudice to the future enactment of constitutional amendments recommended by the Constitution Review

Commission, will shortly seek to amend the existing Constitution to reverse the effects of the PRATT AND MORGAN line of cases.

For other reasons also, my Government will continue to support the regional effort for the establishment of a Caribbean Court of Justice as a matter of the greatest urgency.

Mr. President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

I have outlined to you my Government's programme for this new session of Parliament. I extend to you my best wishes in your new Parliamentary Session and pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your deliberations.

Governor-General  
Government House  
BARBADOS  
February 16, 1999

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is now resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to move the adjournment of this Honourable House and that it be adjourned until March 2, 1999.

I wish to advise that I have consulted with the Leader of the Opposition and that all further Sittings will start at 11.00 a.m. and there will be provision for a tea interval around 5.00 p.m.

With those words, I beg to move that this House be .now adjourned until Tuesday, March 2, 1999, at 11.00 a.m.

*The question that the House be adjourned to Tuesday, March 2, 1999 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 6.00 p.m.*

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