

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 - 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

November 23, 1999

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, November 23, 1999.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)

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 and Minister for 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)

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.), LEC (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)

Hon. 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.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS

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

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

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

Hon. A. P. WOOD, J.P., B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

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

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, November 16, 1999.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, November 16, 1999 have been circulated and I have not found any errors or omissions but subject to any such errors or omissions that any Honourable Members may wish to make, I beg to move that these Minutes be confirmed.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am commanded to lay the Report on the operation of the Barbados Drug Service for fiscal years April 1995 to March 1997 inclusive.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I am commanded to lay the Annual Report of the Department of Labour for the years 1994 and 1995.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Mr. D. T. GILL: I beg to give notice of a resolution in tribute of the late Mr. Malcolm Denzil Marshall.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS Mr.

SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following question:

Question No. 25

To ask the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs:

Will the Minister state

- (a) the shareholding of the Government in each of the following:

Barbados Sugar Industry Limited (BSIL),

Barbados Agriculture Management Company Limited (BAMC), and

Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Co. Limited (BACT)?

- (b) the composition of the Boards of Directors of BSIL, BAMC and BACT?

- (c) whether Government has financed or agreed to finance any office space or any administrative services for the BSIL and the location of such office space since 1993?

- (d) whether between 1993 and 1999 Government has received valuation reports of the assets of BSIL, and if so, the value assigned to the assets in the reports and the source of such reports?

- (e) whether Government has financed any capital or other investment in BSIL since 1993, and the total amount of any such finance including all costs associated with it?

- (f) the amount, if any, outstanding to the Barbados National Bank (BNB) on the BSIL loan prior to its transfer to BACT and any interest charged, if any, on the debt between the date of transfer and the date on which any option to purchase was exercised?

- (g) whether Government, BAMC and/or BACT has paid on behalf of BSIL since 1993 any commitments in relation to outstanding bonds, interest on any obligations including bonds, or any other non-administrative expenses?

- (h) whether Government or BAMC or BACT has agreed to exchange the debts of BSIL for its assets, extinguish the debts of BSIL or purchase BSIL's debts at a value determined later than 1993 on a debt with interest accrued up to 1993 or at all and, if so, the date or dates agreed on for completion of such transactions?

- (i) whether Government or BAMC or BACT has agreed to pay any sum to BSIL to maintain its corporate existence and to pay its professional fees since 1995?

- (j) whether Government, or BAMC or BACT has paid any legal or other professional fees on behalf of BSIL, the independent growers, the owners of indebted estates or any other party:

- (1) in connection with the transfer of assets of BSIL from BNB to the Government, BAMC, or BACT; or

- (2) in connection with any negotiations relating to the purchase or lease of assets by any party, the extinguishment of debts; or

- (3) any matter affecting the disposition of assets or liabilities or obligations by any party in relation to the restructuring of the sugar industry, the amounts paid, if any, and the recipients thereof?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 - THE POLICE
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 1999

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple Bill. In its terms, you will notice that it has just two clauses. It comes before the House to correct an anomalous situation that has prevailed for many years. The practice has been, that when a police officer is promoted to the rank of Gazetted Officer, a lump sum payment is made to that officer for the purpose of allowing him to obtain adequate and appropriate uniform. That practice has been in vogue for many years. In fact it conflicts with section 24(1) of the Financial, Administration and Audit Act, Chapter 5 which provides:

"The fixed claims on the Crown in respect of salaries, services and allowances shall be paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly as the Minister may determine."

Under section 24 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act there is no provision for the payment of the allowance in a lump sum. The matter was referred to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Cabinet has agreed that there is no discretion as to the manner in which allowances are to be paid. In order to regularize the situation, we have to make the amendment and provide, that notwithstanding section 24, the uniform allowance that is payable to an officer who is promoted to the gazetted rank, may be paid as a lump sum. That is the purpose and intent of this Bill, Sir.

However, Mr. Speaker, the Bill affords me an opportunity to speak about some matters relating to the Royal Barbados Police Force. We are all aware of the events of last month when a large number of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force were afflicted by illness.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The position of the Government in relation to the police and their claims must be set in proper context. Our Manifesto of 1999 indicates the policy in relation to the Royal Barbados Police Force.
11.30a.m.

I go back, Sir, to the Manifesto of 1999 which indicates the following in relation to the police. This Party and this Government pledged itself on page 61 to:

"Improve the terms and conditions of service of police officers, re-grade posts and increase the number of officers."

Other things are set out at page 61.

There is political commitment to improve the terms and conditions of police officers, including a commitment to make provision for the regrading of the scale that applies to them.

I think I said last week that the sincerity of the Government in fulfilling that political commitment as stated on page 61 of the Manifesto has to be judged by the public and by the police against the fulfilment of the promises made in the 1994 Manifesto. In that Manifesto a number of commitments were made which have been carried out in the succeeding five years to September 1994. I am not going to go into the details now. Much of those details would be recorded in the document that was put out, the compendium, a kind of promises and performance document.

I indicated last week why the Government decided as a matter of strategy to upgrade systematically the police stations in this country. I just want to repeat that since 1994 the Central Police Station has started to be redeveloped - the east wing that runs on to Coleridge Street. In the backyard work is going on that the press does not seem to know of, because there has been no coverage whatever for the last year of what is happening in the police's backyard. In the backyard a big structure is being erected to provide proper canteen facilities, a lounge for policemen and new quarters for female officers. If you look from outside Tudor Street, you would see it in the air.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. We seem to be having a problem in here. It seems as though a tape is being replayed in this Parliament because what I am hearing now is what I heard last week.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That the Honourable Member, Sir, is repeating exactly what he said last week and the Standing Orders do not allow you to say the same thing in the same period.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Repetition is important sometimes. Sir, that work, as I said, will continue in a phased way. We are going to develop other buildings inside Central in a short time.

You look at District C, District B, Belleplaine, and Black Rock, Eagle Hall. I am not sure that they have moved into Black Rock yet but they should be moving in shortly if they have not done so. The work was finished and the contractor claimed but I think we had a little problem with the roof and with the heavy rains recently and there was a leak. Eagle Hall is virtually ready, refurbished and renovated for police to go back in.

We are going to start in this financial year and we are going to go into the next financial year with the refurbishment and the redevelopment of District 'A'. That station up there is in a terrible state. I am not going to reflect on the quality of workmanship that went into that station but it really is not good. We have to spend some considerable funds on District 'A' to rehabilitate it. Some work has been done up there already including work on the stables and so on because we had to keep most of the horses there.

Oistins will have to attract work next year. Generally, all the stations have had refurbishment and some are crying out for more now. In fact, we want to do Crab Hill fairly soon and then next year and the year after we should have completed the refurbishment programme. Next year, subject to what the Ministry of Finance does at Estimates, I would hope to start the new District 'D' at Cane Garden, St. Thomas and also redevelop a building in Speightstown for the new District 'E'. The plans and drawings for District 'D' are virtually finished. Those for District 'E' will be finished in this financial year.

In addition to that, Sir, the police force was computerised from 1996 after a resolution was brought here in 1995. In addition to the \$1.5 million that was spent at the initial phase of computerisation, last year we gave another 44 computers to the police. Those were not out of Government's budget but were the result of negotiations between myself and the American Government for computers for the law enforcement agencies.

We did more, Sir. The police had regulations for discipline made in 1961. Last year, we completely modernised the Police Disciplinary Code. The Promotion Regulations of the police force were made in 1954 and successive governments never did anything to modernise the Promotion Regulations. In 1998 new Regulations governing promotions in the Force were made as a result of a consultative process between the Association, management of the Force and the Parliamentary Counsel and head officers in five Ministries. They wanted new regulations and they have new promotion regulations. I will speak about training because the amount of training that is offered a year to police officers at all levels is phenomenal both locally, regionally and outside of the region. We have increased the amount of training for policemen at all levels in the last five years. However, the salaries and allowances of police officers have been recognised by this Government as being in need of an increase. 11.40a.m.

When my Ministry was asked by the Ministry of the Civil Service at the end of May for our comments on certain proposals made by the Police Association, at the Press Conference, the second Saturday of October, I read a letter from my Ministry which said that the office of the

Attorney-General totally supports the case for a regrading within the context of total regrading of the public service. That is the position of my Ministry and the position of the Government. We recognise and support the case for a regrading but what the Government is unwilling to do at this time is to pull out the police and try to regrade them separately outside the total regrading exercise that has to be done for the whole public service. That is where the point of dispute arises, as I understand it. I was away when a lot of it developed. Since I have come back, as I understand it, the point of dispute that raised its head in October between the police and the Ministry of Civil Service was not that the Government and the Ministry of Civil Service were not in favour of a regrading but what the Ministry was saying was that they could not do it for the police at that time. That it would create all kinds of disequilibrium in the system if an attempt was made to hive off the police and deal with them separately.

However, I wish to announce that on Friday, this House will be reconvened at 10 o'clock and we will be bringing the various Resolutions and Orders to make sure that all public officers including the police get the increase that has recently been agreed by National Union of Public Workers.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They will get a share of the Productivity Bonus and they will get the first tranche of the 8%.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I have to do it on Friday so that the public workers, including the police can get a piece of change for Christmas. I want the Senate to meet next week Wednesday so that this matter is dealt with. We cannot delay it any longer or else they would not be able to get the pay sheets and all the paraphernalia ready, therefore, we have to do it Friday and let the Senate meet on those matters next Wednesday.

Sir, the police, particularly at the bottom, have a strong case for salary increase. A Police Constable starts at \$15091.42 and goes to \$23 048.75; a Sergeant starts at \$24 019 and goes to \$26 029; a Station Sergeant starts at \$27000 to \$28040; an Inspector starts at \$29010 to \$31 047; Assistant Superintendent \$32 043 to \$35 072; Superintendent \$37 000 to \$43 057 and so on.

There are allowances which are paid. Gazetted officers get an allowance for uniform of \$19 080 per annum as well as gets his telephone paid by Government. A detective gets a detective allowance \$15 000 and washing allowance of \$1 020; an Inspector who is a detective gets an allowance of \$13 044 per year, a plain clothes allowance of \$1 092, and a

washing allowance of \$1 020 and telephone allowance of \$372. A Station Sergeant gets a detective allowance, if he is a detective, of \$12 072, a plain clothes allowance of \$1 092, a washing allowance of \$939, travelling allowance of \$3 600, responsibility allowance of \$600 and telephone allowance of \$372. A Sergeant, if he is a detective gets \$1 272, a plain clothes allowance of \$1 092, a washing allowance of \$939, and a responsibility allowance of \$600. A Constable at the bottom gets a detective allowance of \$1 004, a plain clothes Constable gets \$1 092, washing allowance of \$939 and a responsibility allowance of \$600.

I will not speak about the subsistence allowance of \$11.50 per day. They get free travel on the buses. Those who qualify for driving licence, the Government pays for the driving licence. They get some medical expenses paid including half of the cost of spectacles. There is a case for increasing both the salaries and the allowances. I reasonably believe that the Ministry of Civil Service is favourably looking at an increase in the allowances. Those allowances do not deal with the special operations. For special operations or for a policeman servicing at private functions, we start at the bottom at \$ 18 an hour. This moved from \$8 last year to \$18 an hour - there is \$18, \$20 and \$22 the higher it goes.

The Government itself by those kinds of increases in allowances has recognised that there is a case for enhancing the allowances of policemen. 11.50a.m.

Mr. Speaker, a lot was written and a lot was said about the recent difficulties. I am not going into those difficulties, because I think that the Police made their point and everybody heard and we must move on. There is to be no victimization or incrimination and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy heard what I said I am going to do for them next year.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That concept does not operate with me. The men had a point to make and they made the point. You can have a view as to the extent of it, whether it should have been so widespread. That has passed and I hope we do not ever go through that situation again, because it has led itself in some quarters to adverse comment. But I have a feeling that a lot of people never stopped for once to read the law that applied. I will start first with the Police Act, chapter 167.

The Commissioner of Police is not responsible to the Attorney-General, nor he is not responsible to the Prime Minister. That is the first thing that has to be understood about the organisation and operation of the RBPF. The Commissioner of Police is responsible to the Governor-General and I read section 8.

"The Commissioner of Police shall have the command and superintendence of the Force, and shall be responsible to the Governor-General for the efficient administration and government of the Force and for the proper expenditure of all public moneys appropriated for the service thereof."

That was obvious and everybody who thinks a little bit should understand why that was done by the Democratic Labour Party in 1961 when they brought this legislation.

In 1961 the Democratic Labour Party brought that Act which made the Commissioner of Police responsible to the Governor-General and notwithstanding independence and notwithstanding a written constitution, that has not been changed.

One recognises that the Police have a right to get together as a group and form an association. The law provides for that, but there is a question of how far to go. The Police Act in 1961 made provision for the establishment of a police association. However, at the same time as it recognises the right of the policemen to comply, it restricted the kinds of activities which that Association could do.

Section 44 says,

"For the purpose of this Part, the expression "unauthorised association" means:

- (a) any trade union as defined by the Trade Unions Act, whether or not the union is registered or incorporated;
- (b) any league or association of body of persons, whether registered or not, which has for its objects, or one of its objects, the promotion of feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes or races;
- (c) any other association, society or club, any of the objects of which may be subversive of good discipline on the part of a member of the Force and which the Commissioner, with the approval of the Governor-General, declares to be an unauthorised association".

So the Commissioner, with the approval of the Governor-General can determine which groups the association can have relations with.

Section 45:

"(1) For the purpose of enabling Inspectors, subordinate police officers and constables of the Force to consider and bring to the notice of the Commissioner and the Governor-General matters affecting their

general welfare and efficiency, there shall be established an organisation to be called the Police Association which shall act through a Central Committee as provided by rules made under this Act.

(2) No representation shall be made by the Police Association in relation to any question of discipline, promotion, transfer, posting, leave or any other matter in so far as it affects individual cases."

So that the law is saying that the Association can get together on a collective basis for the promotion of the welfare and efficiency of the Members of the Force. But in respect of an individual member, let us say, who has not been promoted or who has been disciplined by the Commissioner, that is not within the purview of the Association.

Section 46 says:

"(1) The Commissioner acting after consultation with the Police Association, may, with the approval of the Governor-General, make rules for the constitution and management of the Police Association and for any matter relating thereto."

The structure of the law in setting out a relationship under which the Police Association is still answerable to the Commissioner- the Commissioner, acting after consultation with the Police Association, may, with the approval of the Governor-General, make rules for the constitution and management of the Association.

The rules of the Police Association indicate that the Association shall be constituted of all persons below the rank of Assistant Superintendent, acting through the Branch Boards and the central committee.

Rule 11 of the Police Association Rules:

"There shall be constituted a Central Committee consisting of 16 members, two of whom shall be elected by the Inspectors' Branch, four by the Station Sergeants' and Sergeants' Branch, three by the Corporals' Branch, five by the Constables' Branch and two by the Writ-servers' branch."

I am reading these to show Honourable Members how outdated these rules are, but they are still the law. These rules are from 1961. I have not had a request to update or modernize them. When I meet with the President, I am going to suggest that we do a project to modernize these rules. We had promised in the Manifesto to modernize the Promotional and Disciplinary Rules and we did them. I am prepared to use the same kind of procedure of the working group to upgrade the Association's rules.

Even though parts of the present law are outdated, for example the mention of writ-servers and corporals, the present law says that:

"(a) The Central Committee shall receive representation from the Branch Boards and may, after notifying the Commissioner of Police, request him to forward such representations to the Governor-General;

(b) Consider and report upon any matters referred to it by the Commissioner of Police or the Governor-General."

The procedure for making representations about the matters upon which the Association is set up is that they come through the Commissioner and go to the Governor-General. That is the law of Barbados.

It would appear that a different practice operated in ignorance of, or in violation of the law for these disciplinary rules in the subsidiary legislation. 12.00 noon.

For the future and so long as those laws which I read exist, we have, as a disciplined organisation, to follow those rules and procedures as lay down in the law that relates to the organisation. Government will help in many respects to formulate the representations etc. The law of Barbados is that representations of the Police Association must go to the Commissioner and then to the Governor-General. I only dwell on those matters, because I read a lot, I laughed a lot and I shook my head in disbelief, that many people were writing editorials and specialist columns without researching the law.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You have a problem that bears on the law. The first thing you must know, is that you go to the statute of law, if you do not find the answer there, then you look to the common law. I hope that the position is now clear.

Sir, the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force have been working manfully with stoic resolve to keep crime under control in Barbados. Therefore, they deserve the accommodation of the public. Unfortunately, the public of Barbados is very fickle. They like what the Trinidadians call a "Good Friday bobolee," (something to pelt at) if it is not the Attorney-General, it is the Police.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: From time to time, one understands the public outcry. From time to time you get brutal murders and a spate of armed robberies and other

related crimes and this society gets very emotionally concerned. That is understandable. That is what is called the fear of crime and we have to try to respond. In any part of the world, the impact of crime is measured by looking at the statistical records over a period of time. I am not saying that the statistics are foolproof, of course, they are not. In criminology, they warn you that there is what is called 'the dark figure'; that is the amount of crime that is not reported but is happening and does not make the criminal statistics. The only way you can test the true level is by doing a crime survey which will require us in Barbados to do a sample of perhaps 7000 - 8000 people. This is a very costly exercise and it will take a very long time. I think the University did one in respect of sexual offences. I have not seen the result of it, but I remember seeing them on the television advertising a crime survey in sexual cases. However, the grand total of crime is slightly decreasing. We had a good period between December 1994 and June 1998 when crime declined substantially.

As I explained last week in another context, there were the problems that started with the internecine activity in July and August last year at Club Edey which gradually escalated with the masterminding of certain robberies by a person who is now, thankfully, in jail in St. Lucia. I want to take the opportunity to thank the St. Lucia Police Force for the cooperation that it shared with the Royal Barbados Police Force in apprehending Harding in September.

Sir, I hope that the committee on law and order that has been established by this House will function effectively. I want to encourage all members to attend the first meeting which will be in January. I say January, because this is a bad time of the year to try to have meetings. In any event by then we would have the statistics for the whole of 1999 which would give us a benchmark against which to adjudge the state of crime. Honourable Members will have an opportunity to put all their theories or whatever to the people who are responsible for law enforcement.

I am not going to deal with crime and the approaches of crime today because I expect shortly to be bringing a supplementary to set up the special Anti-Gun Unit in the Royal Barbados Police Force. On that occasion, I may repeat some of the approaches that I alluded to in the press conference.

I just wanted to say that the Leader of the Opposition said last week that he had seen and heard of the 10-point plan which I elaborated at the press conference in October. I do not think that he had any great quarrel with it. I just want to put it in the records that that 10-point plan is carefully developed because it speaks to ten areas of activity that have been proven by international evidence to work in reducing offences. I want to repeat it. Those ten elements of the plan are matters which the international criminological

evidence has shown worked in reducing crime. If Members can get hold of the Sherman Report, a study done more than two years ago for the United States Congress, they would see in there, some of those matters perhaps expressed differently from how I express them, but essentially those are matters which as I say, the international evidence has shown to work. We are not operating on the basis of hunch, personal belief or assumptions, we are operating in doing things. 12.10p.m.

Let me give you an example. I met a young Barbadian recently. I think he was a Station Sergeant in the Police Force. He had just left Barbados but he did a Masters in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the Scarman Centre at Leicester University. He was so excited after he saw the Press Conference that he wrote me and came to see me to discuss the 10-point plan and he liked it. In particular, he had experience doing his Masters in Leicester with what I call problem oriented policing. He had written a dissertation on that.

He was able to tell me quite independently afterwards that in Leicester it was shown that the police targeted a particular area where there were problems by going in there and working with the deviant youths. It had a dramatic effect in reducing crime in that area of Leicester where the survey was done.

I am saying there is evidence that all 10 of those strategies I spoke of can have positive success because they have been tested over time and in various situations.

Mr. Speaker, I think I also have a duty to inform the House of two matters which have been engaging the attention of my Ministry since November last year. I have resisted the temptation to respond to people in the Press, particularly one Sunday columnist, because these matters were announced. We spoke about them during the election campaign and yet this columnist was calling on me to bring them.

I refer first of all to the Police Complaints Authority. Last November I set up a working group in the Ministry to advise me on the establishment of an independent Police Complaints Authority. This is something that both Sides have talked about in here before. For as long as I have been a Member of this House it has been called for and nothing really happened.

I am in the position to say to Honourable Members that I have received the report of the working group on the establishment of an independent Police Complaints Authority. It comprised members of the Police Force, members of the general public and members of my Ministry. It has been sent to me for my consideration. After I have

considered it and it has been refined it will go to Cabinet because it is a commitment of the Barbados Labour Party in its 1994 Manifesto. Next year we will bring the legislation to support the independent Police Complaints Authority.

We have looked at legislation. I know we have looked at Trinidad and Jamaica as well as certain States in America. We have looked at the Canadian legislation, New Zealand and Australia. The Working Group has drawn on the best of the various jurisdictions.

One consequence of this will be that even though the Police Force has presently a Complaints Division, we are going to institutionalise it in the legislation and provide for a separate Complaints Division. We are going to authorize the Commissioner to establish it as a matter of law, that is how it is done in the legislation, for example, in Jamaica and Trinidad, a separate Complaints Division within the Force. They will have an independent Complaints Authority which will work with, and also it can work independently of that Complaints Division. At the appropriate time I will give the House all the information about it when we bring the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the second matter relates to compensation for victims of violent crimes. We have a commitment in the Manifesto to deal with that. It says at the bottom of page 61: "Implement a scheme to compensate victims of violent crime."

I want to also announce to the House, Sir, that a broad-based working party was set up in October last year to study the question of compensation for victims of violent crime. They reported in August this year. The Cabinet Paper has been drafted. We have received the comments of the Ministry of Finance so it should be going to Cabinet this week or next week at the latest.

We would like to establish a scheme to compensate victims of violent crime from the next financial year. I will not say January but from the next financial year beginning April 2000. The Report that has been presented to me draws on the experience which some of us had. Members of my Ministry and myself observed the operation of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board of England in 1997. We were advised very carefully by that Board not to fall into some of the traps and pitfalls that the English Scheme fell into. That Scheme is a tremendous drain on the Government and could break a government like the Barbados Government.

We looked closely at the Bermudan Scheme. Broadly, what is being recommended to Cabinet is that we use the existing Community Legal Services legislation but amend it substantially to expand the present Board and to strengthen the administration of the Community Legal Services Department.

Under the Community Legal Services legislation, there is provision for legal aid. The state of Barbados has been funding the defences of criminals ever since 1992. We have expanded the Scheme to assist persons in family matters and constitutional matters but no one has really tried to balance that equation and provide state funding for victims of violent crime.

What I want to do, therefore, is to make sure that the legislation which exists caters for both sides of that equation, the criminal as well as the victim. All it means is that there will be some amendment to the legislation to give it the authority to deal with the dispensation of compensation for victims.

We are a small jurisdiction with limited resources. There will have to be a cap on the amount of compensation which a person can receive from the Scheme. The Scheme will be in addition to what presently exists under the Magistrates Courts Act. Members will recall that the new Magistrates Courts Act increased the amount of money which a Magistrate can give as compensation to a person who is injured. People do not realise that a magistrate can give compensation to a person who has been injured. It used to be \$50 but I think that it is now \$500. The Scheme will give more than that and, as I said, we will have a cap and the approach to compensation will be on the basis of the kind of precedents that are used for the settlement of personal injury awards. 12.20p.m.

Those are two matters, Sir, which I think I had a duty to tell the House about because some Members have been concerned. The work was being done by the working parties. They have completed their work and have reported and hereafter it is a question of how fast I get the matter to Cabinet, Cabinet's response and the drafting of the necessary legislation. I reasonably expect and I am confident that both the scheme for compensation for victims of violent crimes and the independent Police Complaints Authority will come into being in the year 2000. We will not start the year 2000 with them but they will happen in the year 2000. I think it would be appropriate in the new millennium to do that.

The non-custodial part of the penal system should be sorted out by February, Sir. My Ministry has been in discussion with the Ministry of the Civil Service on the staff structure. Members will see in the Estimates that there is a vote for \$250 000 and that will allow us to fund the administrative staff and the field staff that will be required for the non-custodial penal system to take effect.

So I hope, Sir, and would like to proclaim the new Penal System Reform Act on February 1, next year. I have already made and signed the rules for attendance centres. All we need now is five community service officers and the five additional probation officers and I expect that the Ministry

of the Civil Service will give us approval shortly. I know that the Prime Minister himself is very keen for this to happen. The new penal system insofar as it relates to non-custodial punishment and the proclamation of the Penal System Reform Act can take effect from 1st February .

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate in closing that the purpose of this short Bill is to remedy an anomaly that has existed because of the language and the imperatives of section 24(1) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. It is to clean that up and tidy it up.

I therefore have great pleasure in moving that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, last week we dealt with the amendment to the Defence Act and we had a debate in passing on the respective roles of the Barbados Defence Force (BDF) and the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) and I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas outlined some of his perspectives on this matter.

I have listened again to the Honourable Member on this matter of the amendment to the Police Act. I, certainly, would have been a lot more comfortable in the context of what has been happening in the past few weeks if the Attorney-General rather than deal with one category of the /police force could in fact have come here with the entire package of conditions of service, increase in pay and what other proposals are going to be put in place for the entire Force. I believe we agreed last week that it is well known, despite all the paraphernalia; despite who the Commissioner reports to; despite the difference between the Attorney-General's views on the reduction of crime and the comments of the Commissioner of Police which may be going in the other direction on the question of crime; at the end of the day what we have in Barbados without a doubt is extremely low morale in the Royal Barbados Police Force.

That is not a matter that the Governor-General can deal with. Therefore who the Commissioner reports to is only part of the equation. Nor can the Commissioner himself increase the salaries of police officers; the Commissioner by himself cannot increase or vary their terms and conditions of service. At the apex of their concerns it appears to me, are questions that relate to their conditions of service which have to be answered in this Chamber. Those seem to be at the root of the problem of low morale in the Royal Barbados Police Force.

I believe or thought that we were essentially agreed that the position of the police and some other categories of public workers is unique. Therefore I was alarmed to hear all of a sudden simply because the police took action that you cannot deal with the police separately and you cannot deal with these other groups, that it would set a monstrous precedent in our society if you treated groups like the police separately from others.

It is precisely when anomalies arise in the system that you have to identify those groups which have either been most disadvantaged or in some way affected by even broad changes which might have impacted on every other category of public officer. I believe that is precisely what categories of workers like the police, nurses and teachers are saying, that they have critical roles in the society, that broad based generic changes in relation to conditions of service across the public sector are not sufficiently focussed on the unique problems that they have in their profession. All they are asking is for special attention to be paid to the risks of the profession and rewards for the nature of the work that they do.

To say then, in response to police action, that it sets a monstrous precedent when you look at one category of workers and seek to deal with their problems without reference to the others is nonsense.

It did not come from you. Of course not, just like the editorial did not come from you. These things are orchestrated by the image makers and the PR specialists who fax information around only to destroy people's credibility including those on that Side rather than get on with the people's business and their principal function is to boost one person's image in this country. We are going down a dangerous slope in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I warn the Attorney-General that at least on the issue of problems in relation to the Royal Barbados Police Force and crime that there is basis for agreement between you and us - there has always been. The Government said that they need to collect the information first when they got in in 1994 and that there were critical studies *etcetera* that had to be carried out. We have now come to the point where I always thought that we agreed that a focus on the police was necessary for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the point that the Honourable Member made almost at the end of his speech when he spoke about the gentlemen who spoke to him in London. 12.30p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I got distracted and I did not hear the conclusion of his speech but the essence of the point that I understood the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to be making is that the police play a very vital and critical role in the society in relation to crisis prevention and helping to build discipline in communities. That the role of police has now reached out and extended.

Let me say for the record, as I have also said to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, I am eternally indebted to the Royal Barbados Police Force resident beat officers who worked in the area of Gall Hill, St. John. They did a

phenomenal job. It was only when they were gone that we started to see problems. Even though the National Sports Council had put up light for basketball - which I am very grateful for - a few weeks later, a murder in the area basically chased everybody back into their homes. The young people themselves said that they would at least like to have some of those resident beat police officers. The officers we had up there were well trained beyond their policing skills in basketball and volleyball. They were also involved in cricket, football and other forms of social work. At 3 o'clock when the youngsters were coming home from school the resident beat officer was there when fellows were playing cricket in the road and started cursing or whatever, they would go and intervene and tell them to get their act together.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It does have an impact. I am not saying that every society needs to be corralled and restricted by the presence of having armed officers walking around and pushing people around. There is a way in which you can integrate the work of well-trained policemen who have other unique skills. I will say this. They were doing more work in that community than people who were trained and paid to be involved in community work. I believe this is the experience of many communities in Barbados. The police force do not only see their role as going into the area and walking around with batons and guns. They do get involved. That is the honest truth.

At the end of the day, if that strategy was working and the Honourable Attorney-General had only one point in his plan rather than ten points and it was the only point that he had, he would have made a much more dramatic impact immediately if that was accompanied by an improvement in the other terms and conditions of service of police officers.

I looked at the ten points that have been made and I said to the Attorney-General that basically, eight out of ten of them rest on an improvement in the morale, status and standing of the police force in Barbados. The Honourable Member may disagree. Some of them are difficult to implement at the best of times like the question of searching every boat that returns to Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, that is the eleventh point of the ten-point plan. How are you really going to deploy them? You cannot stand up over every police officer here in Barbados. If you send them out to the nether regions like Consett Bay, Skeetes Bay, Tent Bay, Shroud Bay and all over Barbados, how are you going to guarantee...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You remember what happened down there? What happened is that when the police saw the quality of equipment that the guys had, some of them...

Asides

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, you know what happened. The point that I am making is that these officers are putting life and limb on the nail when they are working in communities. It is true that we have had several incidents of abuse of power by police officers in Barbados in executing search warrants and perhaps even in some of the ways in which they have conducted themselves in dealing with a melee or a situation where people are in a state of frenzy. However that should not detract from the fact that invariably those have been situations in which they have been imposed on a scenario, whereas had they been there from the beginning those scenarios would not have developed.

I believe that there is a difference between a resident police officer knocking on somebody's door and saying: "Madam, there is a problem with your son, please let the officers come in" and kicking down a door, pushing down people, ripping up beds, pelting furniture through the window and breaking windows *etcetera*. We have had those kinds of incidents. That should not detract from the fact that other than that, the role of a police officer is so wide and varied and so critical to the peace and harmony of our society that it is in need of a review. That is why I am saying that what we would have preferred today was a comprehensive issue that did not just deal with officers promoted to the gazetted ranks but dealt in a very broad based way with the problems of the police force.

I daresay that no matter what settlement is reached on Friday which applies across the public service, it will still be found that when the police of Barbados take home their pay packet and look at the disparity or lack, thereof of their benefits or their station in the whole structure of Government, in relation to their position on salary scales and so on that the problem of morale will return. The short term benefit may be out-weighed by the long term morale issues that we have to deal with.

I think it is unfortunate in our society that in an attempt to send a broad message to the police about the way in which they conducted themselves over the past few weeks, that a personal attack was launched on the President of the Police Association in a very wilful and nasty way in an editorial in one of our leading newspapers. It was a nasty and personal attack. No doubt there is a reason for that because people who find themselves in the hands of the law from time to time believe that they must retaliate whenever they wield their pen. It was a nasty and vicious attack and it was not the first because there are people on that Side when they fell out of favour with certain individuals, have had written attacks launched on them from certain places. We have had it on this Side...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You know the technique. It was written and faxed down to that newspaper and carried verbatim. It was a concentrated plan to discredit the individual. That cannot help and it is not part of good governance - that ego-maniacal approach, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that some people demonstrate.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Not in this Chamber. It was outside of this Chamber but it is a very dangerous development that one has to watch very very carefully. I do not think it was necessary to seek to destroy the President of the Police Association simply to make a point that there are some Barbadians who believe that the police should not have taken the action they took. Well, there are some who feel so - fine. There are other things that happen in Barbados on a daily basis at a micro scale in which similar kinds of scenarios develop in which nobody says anything.

The police obviously wanted to make a point. It seems as though they made some point in the process. They may be a dispute about how they did it but it did not mean that they were to be called 'sickees' and that the medical doctors in Barbados, simply to score a political point, were to be bitterly criticised in the way that they were. I even saw something written about Professor Walrond. It sunk to that level and anybody who appeared to support the position of the police became an enemy - not of the Attorney-General because he was out of the island and had not yet spoken a word on the matter - but became an enemy of a certain individual in this country and was destined for criticism, vituperation and abuse.

It should send a warning to all Honourable Members on that Side that anytime the line is crossed with a certain individual, your entire career could be destroyed by the pen of that person in pursuit of that ego-maniacal approach. I think that is wrong and I honestly believe that the President of the Police Association, a person who is very aggressive in the task that he performs, did not deserve to be excoriated in the way that it was done. It was wrong and it will even conduce to more problems in the morale of the RBPF because what it then created was a situation where the police and the Government were pitted almost as enemies of each other because those editorials (for some reason) are always viewed as the official position of the Barbados Labour Party for what reason I do not know, Mr. Speaker, but that is the case and there may be good reasons for that perception. 12.40p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that the way in which the Police Association is handled in this matter, they are entitled to due regard and respect. We sought to develop a social partnership in 1992/1993. It is true that there are some

people who cannot participate. There are many other people who should be part of that social partnership and as long as the Government adopts a position that the private sector, whose head is chosen in a manner that is not transparent and nobody even knows how that individual is selected and is given certain latitude, access, rights. It does not appear to be a democratic process. It is on some consensus basis. We also go to the extent where the trade union movement enshrined certain democratic principles so that they could select an individual to speak on their behalf, or have the right if they so desired in certain matters, to speak on their own individual behalf and then the Government, which functions as both an employer and in its capacity as the voice of the society, in a very rare sense. We went to all that trouble only to have a situation in Barbados where in 1999, there are more incidents of labour and other unrest even in relation to disciplined forces than you had before social partnerships were in existence in our country.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Something must be wrong. There is also a social partnership in which the relations are so good that one partner can speak for the other. If one partner is not speaking, the other partner can go and say, I know that X feels this way on the issue but on a matter like this, one individual was singled out and the Police Association was singled out for very bitter criticism simply because the rules which some say are archaic in relation to their representation and their trade union are not the same as those in relation to other trade unions. The whole purpose of the social partnership was to include the staff association. There was a reason for that and I thought that since 1992, we were well passed the stage where we were arguing about the nature of what we wanted to offer to even the staff associations and to a lesser extent the disciplined forces in our country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas should be well aware by now that unless very serious steps are taken to improve the morale of the RBPF, improve their conditions of service, which in itself would achieve that goal, that many of the efforts that have been made in this society, would come to zero.

The evidence is there. Apart from the largest amount of drugs prevalent in this country in its history, according to the Police, in the first quarter of 1999....

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am talking about the last period around the general election. The Police said it was 1999 January or February, there was a statement in which the Police said they had to deal with the largest amount of drugs in this country during that period. Plus, a situation in which, despite all of the things that are being done including the gun

amnesty, the Commissioner of Police himself said that it failed to deal with the problem of gun violence, the prevalence of guns and other forms of gun related crimes on our streets.

We are really in a very difficult scenario. We are dealing with a situation in which our Tourist Industry is no less fragile than any other tourist industry in the Caribbean. We are dealing with a situation in Barbados where there is still a lot of pent up resentment. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas needs to ensure this country that he is able to deal adequately with the problems of violence, gun related crimes, drugs and other matters which come to the attention of the Police on a daily basis.

That basically is our perspective, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that we would have been much happier had the Government been able to identify a package of proposals for the benefit of the members of RBPF from the top to the bottom, stressing that there is agreement almost across the society that the roles they perform, that the status which they hold, that the problems in relation to morale in the RBPF almost place them in a special and unique category for the urgent attention of Government. Until we start to give national leadership to the problems of violence in this country, national leadership to the problems of crime and national leadership to the concerns of those entities that are seeking to deal with these problems, we are going to make no headway whatsoever.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. this afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 12.50p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: The Government of Barbados has, to the best of my knowledge, committed itself to a positive programme of change and improvement in relation to the Royal Barbados Police Force. The Barbados Labour Party Manifesto of 1999, at pages 60 and 61 speak to that matter, and in part it stresses that the Government is committed to implementing measures to:

"Create a modern, sophisticated and appropriately equipped Police Force and to improve the environment in which officers have to function/"

"Improve the terms and conditions of service of police officers, regrade posts and increase the number of officers."

I do not know why anyone on the Other Side should think that we are poles apart on this matter. It seems to me that there is a divergence of opinion around the issue of timing in relation to the re grading of police officers. This became clear to me when the Honourable Member for St. John and Leader of the Opposition spoke that he was concerned particularly about two things, one of which had to do with the matter of better remuneration and regrading for members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. As I understood him, he seems to be stressing the need for special treatment of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force with reference to the old issue of regrading.

I am of the view that although we commonly share the sentiments with reference to the need for that regrading, this business of singling out particular groups for special treatments is an exercise which is fraught with danger and goes into a situation where precedents are set for a basis in future action which perhaps might not be the best course of action when that situation arises. I believe, when we move to implement change, it should not be frivolously pursued, it should not be likely taken and it should not be gone into without thought for the implications of those changes.

It seems to me, that the Honourable Member was also concerned about the issue of morale in the Royal Barbados Police Force. I believe this is a sentiment which would find common feeling from this Side. We would want to know that one of the units which is critical to our security system in Barbados functions within the context where the level of morale is sufficiently high as would leave all of us assured that our safety and security are well looked after.

I wish to speak with reference to the matter of change as I support the matter before the House. This matter speaks to change and it speaks to an adjustment in the way we do things because throughout life this becomes necessary sometimes. When we are talking about organisations of such critical importance, then it behoves us always to understand fully and to come to terms with the fact that these organisations must adjust to changes which are taking place in the wider environment if they are to survive and continue in a healthy state and if they are to be of relevance in terms of the objectives to which they have been established. Change, in my view, should not be cosmetic. Change, in my view, should be substantive and practical. Change, does not have to be revolutionary but it should be substantive. We should address those things which are of practical worth insofar as the situation demands. I believe the programmes

to which the Government is committed, which are outlined in the Manifesto to which I referred, underscore the fact that Government possesses an understanding that there must be change, and change in a positive direction and this change must be substantive and practical.

In the Royal Barbados Police Force, we need to see some degree of change taking place at the level of the Force as an organisation. When we examine organisations, reference has to be made to the kind of management that obtains in those organisations. If I understand the thrust of Government's programmes, it seems to me, that there is an attempt to ensure that the Royal Barbados Police Force possesses the type of management which will carry the Force in the direction where we all as law-abiding and honest citizens would want to see it go.

Good management has implications for the morale of the organisation. Good management has implications for the handling of finances and other resources that are relative to the organisation. I am suggesting that when we contemplate change, we must contemplate that change at the level of the organisation and we must target features such as the management of the organisation and the world in which we live today. Therefore, I am suggesting that if we want to address problems of morale in any organisation - and we happen to be talking about the Royal Barbados Police Force - then we have to see how we can address matters of relevance to the management of the organisation.

I believe the Royal Barbados Police Force should be encouraged to develop a kind of corporate strategy which is viable and one which is in keeping with the developmental thrust of this nation as a whole. We need to see a Force which has a sense of vision and a sense of direction. I believe where that is found, the policies which emanate should be such as would facilitate that vision and help to strengthen the image of the organisation to which we made reference.

The Royal Barbados Police Force, must come to terms with the business of performance accountability. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas in making his contribution alluded to such things as an independent Complaints Authority, which again, is part of the commitment and policy undertaking of this government. These are issues with which the Royal Barbados Police Force would need to come to terms, when one considers the environment of change, the culture of change or the changes within the culture that obtains around the Police Force.

I believe we have long gone past the day when it was a matter of "lick up and lock up" or "lock up and lick up." I believe that perhaps it should never be "lick up" and it should not always be a question of "lock up."

Government, by its policies, I believe, is seeking to ensure that the officers within the force are sufficiently respected, adequately recognised and properly remunerated. That forms part of the crux of the matter before us, the business of respect, recognition and remuneration.

While I do not think that any particular grouping should be singled out for special treatment, I really believe that one is worthy of the kind of respect which we would reasonably expect to attach itself to one's function and the police is no different from anyone else.

I want to go beyond the organisation and talk about the change at the level of the individual police officer. I believe that the profile of the police officer in Barbados needs to be changed and improved. I believe in a sense, this is what this debate is about and others to follow soon will be about. If we are talking about changing the profile of the police officer that has implications for recruitment. If you want people who are respected, if you want to give people their due recognition and to properly reward or remunerate them, then it has implications for the kinds of persons that you are going to recruit. Change at the level of the individual officer, in my view, implies perhaps a different approach and different orientation when it comes to the matter of training. Just to draw an example, I do not know that those officers who are trained in our organisations here in relation to police service are necessarily trained to handle domestic disputes. The statistics seem to suggest that there is a growing incident of crime coining out of the domestic dispute situation. 2.15p.m.

I think, Mr. Speaker, you are a bit further advanced in years than I am and, certainly, I think I am old enough to understand that often in these situations of domestic disputes police are called in and they are summoned, they are advised before the dispute reaches the level where crime is committed.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are saying that I would have had more domestic disputes than any one of us?

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Not at all Mr. Speaker. I am saying your experience is wider than mine and you are a bit more familiar with those things which my limited years have allowed me to gain some degree of familiarity with. Often the police can see the crime coming in the distance and they are unable to do anything to prevent that crime which, inevitably, will come. Perhaps there is some merit in the suggestion that the training which officers receive should include some element which allows them to respond to this type of situation. We are talking, Sir, about change at the level of the individual officer and implications for training, recruitment, remuneration and other matters of that sort.

Perhaps, there needs to be some change at the level of strategy with reference to how the Police Force operates. The use of those two terms might be instructive. I have heard it suggested, for instance, that the constabulary should not be referred to as the Royal Barbados Police Force but should better be referred to as the Barbados Police Service because the word 'force' carries certain connotations which belong to a former day. I am not necessarily advanced in that. What I am suggesting is that we need to look and see how we can improve the service with reference to the strategies which are employed.

Again, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas made reference to matters such as community policing and problem oriented policing. I know the Force has been going in that direction and should be encouraged to do so. Again, I think the policy framework outlined by Government is intended to facilitate development of the Force in that particular direction.

On the other side, but I think equally true, is this matter of the use of appropriate force with reference to counter crime strategies, or with reference to strategies for confronting criminal activity especially of the more dangerous sort.

I believe we need to stop as a nation and consider whether or not we are properly, adequately and sufficiently resourcing the Police Force for its work in the area of counter crime activity in a day such as today when the criminal activity is taking on more dangerous dimensions.

I believe we need to stop and ask ourselves if there is a sufficient basis for ensuring that the Force is more appropriately armed and visibly so. I would not want to suggest here today without wider consultation on that matter that that is the direction in which we ought to go but certainly it is one of the things we have to come to terms with as we debate this matter of change within the Police Force.

There is a matter of change with reference to the offender with whom the Police is confronted from time to time. The offender today is younger. There is a change in the profile of that offender. He is apt to be more violent. He is a member of a gang and frequently these days he is armed. Those are significant changes in the profile of those who are committing offences today. Those changes with reference to the profile of the offender imply changes with reference to strategy, changes with reference to the profile of the individual officer and changes with reference to the institution at its macro level.

The offender today, I want to suggest, must also be seen as a victim. Now, that approach might attract some dissent or at least some debate. I believe the profile of the

offender today suggests in many ways that he is also a victim. He is a victim of social erosion. He is a victim of a declining national value system. He is a victim of addiction. He is a victim of dependency. We need to have our Force trained to the extent that these sometimes subtle and sometimes fairly evident differences can be appreciated because they inform the kind of strategy which is used with respect to the offender today.

Certainly there is a change in the nature of crime. There is more dangerous criminal activity taking place these days. It has now taken on regional dimensions. I remember when the Honourable Attorney-General spoke with reference to this not too long ago, he incurred the displeasure of some of our neighbours for making reference to the fact that there were criminal linkages between neighbouring islands and Barbados and that there was some measure of criminal activity which was to be sourced within the borders of another neighbouring state. Criminal activity has taken on regional dimensions. It is now a regional phenomenon. We are into an era when the impact of globalisation is making itself felt in various ways. It will make itself felt with reference to the character, profile and nature of criminal activity which is taking place around us.

The Police Force must be up-to-date with this fact and must be possessed with an understanding that globalisation not only has strict market implications for us but it also has social implications which will engender some criminal concerns with which the Force will have to grapple and has already, I believe, started to grapple.

Crime is more organised these days. We have to come to grips with things like money laundering. We have to come to terms with the increasing potential for corruption at the official level and at the highest level within the Force itself. How does the Force deal with that? These are new trends which suggest significant changes taking place. I believe any move on the part of Government to better prepare the Force for responding to these changes will be a welcomed move.

Recently we had a situation, Mr. Speaker, in this country where the members of the Police Force in large numbers were on sickout. I would suggest that it caused some dislocation.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because as far as I know they were on certified sick leave.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, recently we had a situation in this country where members of the Police Force in large numbers were out on sick leave and caused, I would suggest, some degree of apprehension on the part of law-abiding people in this country. I am thankful to God that we were spared any eventuality during that time for which we might have had cause to very much regret.

I do not share the view necessarily that it was because of the presence of the Defence Force in visible numbers, or by visible force on the streets, that necessarily countered the situation where we had any serious escalation in crime. That may have contributed to it. I did not find that they were that visible and I believe that it was testimony to the fact that Barbadians are by and large and by far a law-abiding people. Although we do have a problem with crime in this country there are persons who for their own purposes would want to exaggerate the situation to the point where it gives this country a bad name. I believe that that is to be regretted but the fact that the officers were out on sick leave would have caused some dislocation and some degree of discomfort. 2.25 p.m.

There will be for a long time, I imagine, debate as to the role of the military force in civilian life and much can be said with reference to that but I believe that in this country it should never again be allowed to happen that a vacuum seems to exist with reference to the forces charged with the upholding of law and order in civil life in Barbados.

This is very much a personal view, Mr. Speaker, but I believe that serious consideration ought to be given to the establishing of a national civil guard in Barbados which is non-military that in the eventuality that a situation like that should arise again the security of the country is not put at risk. The need perhaps does not exist to the extent that it did to call on the military forces to support the upholding of law and order at the civil level. I am suggesting perhaps that without prejudice to any industrial relations principle some consideration should be given to that, a volunteer force of honest law-abiding hardworking citizens of Barbados who are given to the normal routine but in such an eventuality could be relied upon to give volunteer support in normal policy and to hold the slack in that type of situation.

Training of such a force should be properly suited to prepare them for some of the normal policing functions. I make that as a serious suggestion and perhaps somebody would find that worthy of consideration.

Police service is a critical component of our security system. I want to register my concern that perhaps we are a bit complacent in our attitude to security matters. I have been told that security is very much intelligence driven and there is not always need for the visible presence but again, I think, Mr. Speaker, that both you and I are old enough to know that intelligence is sometimes inadequate. Intelligence is often or sometimes insufficient and though we appreciate the fact that there is an intelligence drive behind the security measures we employ, I still think that we expose ourselves to unnecessary risks if our attitude is not any better than that which indicates some degree of complacency.

If I may allude, Mr. Speaker, to an incident which I witnessed a couple of weeks ago at the end of the day's Sitting here. I observed the swift withdrawal of the uniformed police presence from the yard of this Parliament and Members of Parliament were still in large numbers present in the precinct in one place or another. Yet the police presence was withdrawn. They were picked up in a police vehicle.

Now that may be an operational matter but certainly I believe there is scope there for some kind of directive which speaks to the fact that the security of public officials in Barbados is a thing not to be taken lightly or to be taken for granted.

We are happy about the fact that we have popular Government in Barbados and that we have an exceedingly popular Government at this time. I do not want to be an alarmist and I am not in any way being an alarmist but popular governments have in the past been known to be overtaken by minority elements who are bent on lawlessness and disorder.

I am speaking to the matter of security as it relates to these precincts. We do not recognise any threat from John Citizen here in Barbados. Barbadians, as we said, are law-abiding and well meaning. We have to recognise the presence of a growing foreign element in our country. We have to recognise the presence of a drug element in this country and that the behaviour demonstrated by those given to drug related activities does not leave us with a sense of comfort with reference to the lengths to which they will go sometimes to serve their own ends.

All I am trying to suggest, Mr. Speaker, is that perhaps we need to reflect on our attitude with reference to security. The police service in Barbados is a critical component of that security system.

Perhaps today's back page press is instructive and illustrative of what I am trying to suggest with reference to the discovery of a particular type of weapon. We must be concerned about the signals we send to others. Barbados is not a police state. Barbados is not a military state. We may be concerned with the signals that we send but when I compare the signals others receive whether we send them or not with the possible loss of things that we have long held dear, long cherished and long valued, I come down on the side of caution and do away with a sense of complacency.

We stand to lose our peaceful social traditions, our reputation in this country for stability. We stand to lose a thing which we have long valued, our democratic heritage. We stand to lose if we expose ourselves to risk, the comforts of constitutional rule and government. We have no doubt the capacity to retrieve any situation that develops, any eventuality. We have the military and the police resources to

retrieve any situation but my question would be at what cost. The cost of a great Prime Minister? The cost of an honest and hard working Attorney-General? The cost of ladies who are honoured to serve in this Honourable House and at the highest level? The sanctity of Parliament?

I do not want to be an alarmist but I really do have concerns about these things. And, of course, the Opposition. A majority of people in Barbados I am sure would want to see preserved both the profile and the complement of Opposition numbers on the Other Side.

I want to stress these things. I believe what we are debating here today is a matter of change in the way we do things. If I seem not far reaching as was suggested from the Other Side change must be far reaching when necessary. Change must be practical when necessary. Change should always be substantive. I support the matter before us because I see it as practical, substantive and part and parcel of an overall effort to introduce change which is far reaching and to better prepare the police force for the service for its role in our developing society. 2.35p.m.

Recently, there was an escape from Glendairy Prison - I want to illustrate this and perhaps there is a bit of humour to it because I have a visible responsibility with reference to Glendairy Prison. There was an escape from Glendairy Prison of a man convicted of murder and whose name another murder has been associated. The Honourable Attorney-General was away so he could not call me but nobody in Barbados called Joseph Atherley to ask, are you alright? I have a visible responsibility in relation to the Prison but I was not alarmed. I am just trying to illustrate the principle of the matter.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to support the matter before us. I see it as change which is important; I see it as a larger picture of change. I do not agree with the view proffered by the Leader of the Opposition that we should single out any particular unit for special treatment even though their role is special. The police force in terms of regrading should be handled within the context in which all other work entities in Barbados and in the public service are being handled.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your accommodation in this matter.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, before I get into the meat of my discussion on this particular matter, I would like to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Michael West for taking the advice from me and for putting the Christian side into this debate. I have been calling on

him for a long time to do it and I am happy to see today that he has delivered that speech that I expected of him since January.

Sir, I also want to say that it is O.K. for people to say that the police force should not be separated from the public service but if we are going to make that comment, then we are saying that the conditions that exist between the police force and the normal civil service are the same. No one who gets up and makes the speeches which I have heard earlier today can convince oneself that the conditions that the police are working under today can be compared with the civil servants. The other civil servants have computers to make their jobs easier but the job of policemen today is more difficult. I cannot understand how in one breath you can admit that the job of a policeman is more difficult and yet expect them to remain in the same realm of things.

I will call on the Government to recognise that a policeman cannot tell his wife or family when it is his off day because he might find himself off from work but still in court giving evidence. I want someone to tell me of another civil servant who finds himself in that particular position, I want you, Mr. Speaker, to let the House understand that when a policeman turns up for court, he is not compensated for the time he appears before the court. Sir, then I am told that the policeman must be treated like a civil servant who turns up for work and must be compensated for his or her overtime. How can that be the same said conditions?

All we are asking the Government of Barbados to recognise is that the police are working in dangerous times, working more hours and that they must be fairly compensated for the hours they are putting in. We are not asking for the police to be a special class. The same way that the three men at the Barbados Tourism Authority can be recognised and compensated for 'supposed-to-be-special' talents that have not been delivered; because since they have been given high salaries, tourism has been going down.

The Attorney-General used statistics today in this House to prove that the police service has been able to decrease crime. However, they cannot be compensated nor treated separately but the men at the Barbados Tourism Authority who have caused our tourism to decline, who have caused poor people to stop getting a living from tourism because they are the ones boasting about all inclusive tourism, they can be compensated. Our policemen who have to be on the beat every night and do not know what they will be confronted with, cannot be treated separately in a country like Barbados where people want me to believe that they are caring.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I support this particular Act but I will criticise it. I will tell you why I will criticise it, Sir. When the fish got sick, nobody criticised

the fish for getting sick but when the police got sick everybody criticised them. Thank God it happened around the same time. All those who criticised the policemen should go and criticise the fish too.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the fish died though.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Fortunately for us, the fish died and not the policemen. Thank God for that.

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney-General admitted that the police officers are grossly underpaid. They are so grossly underpaid that the Attorney-General had to bring a uniform allowance and give it to them all at once because he recognised that it was causing burden on them when it was given piecemeal. While the Attorney-General is in here making that argument, the word on the street is that because the gazetted officers had to work, they were compensated by getting their allowances in one but the constables and inspectors, there was nothing to be brought before the House for them.

Sir, I am saying that the police force must be treated in the capacity it deserves. I am happy that the Attorney-General stated in here today that the Commissioner of Police is accountable to the Governor-General. I am happy to hear that. Sir, because some people in Barbados must be told that the Commissioner of Police cannot be controlled by any special commission that anyone wants to set up and no past Brigadier can come and sit on a commission to dictate to the police in Barbados. I am happy that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas used the law to prove that point.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am also happy for the point made by the Attorney-General about the Police Association, that the Police Association is accountable to the Commissioner of Police and nobody else. All those who write in the press and give impressions about all sort of things, must understand that the Police Association is accountable to the Commissioner of Police and that the Commissioner of Police is responsible to his men.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: He is also responsible to the Governor-General but he must also put a case for his men. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we must understand that in dealing with this Amendment we cannot treat the policemen as ordinary people and that they have a special role. In one breath we want them to support us and to look after our security and in another breath we want to curse them.

I warned this Parliament when we were dealing with the amendment to the Police Act that we were making

serious errors. When one goes back and looks at the amendment to the Police Act one would recognise that things were said in there by some white people who had a different opinion about black people that were policemen that should never be back in that Act again. It gives the impression that policemen were rogues and crooks and all of that foolishness. I am saying that the Police Act needs to come back before Parliament and all that foolishness needs to be taken out. I also argued that there is no way that those things could have been discussed with the Commissioner of Police. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas promised me that he would tell the Commissioner of Police that I was against him but I was not against him, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. If the Honourable Member is speaking about the Amendment to the Police Act. I believe they were brought in 1998 to deal with matters of internal discipline, I believe I said at the time and I will repeat now, that those were matters which the Commissioner of Police asked to be implemented in the law. There were expanding the number of offences, as I can recall, relating to discipline - malingering and all that sort of thing was put in - and it was taken from a consideration of the law that applies in England to the Metropolitan Police and in Australia. The Commissioner of Police did request it. 2.45 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I also want right thinking Barbadians to understand that we are living in a Barbados today, Sir, where people feel they have a right to import drugs. When they escape the Defence Force and the Coast Guards, it is the RBPF who has to deal with them.

We must make sure that we must do nothing in our power to undermine those people, because the day that their confidence is down, this country is gone. Sir, we must do everything to build the morale of the RBPF. It does not matter how many pretend they are supporting us, whenever they attack the RBPF and they attack them wrong, we must be prepared to tell those people we are against that foolishness.

It hurts, Sir, to pick up a newspaper in this country and see editorials indicating that our Policemen are criminals and that nothing they do is right. It is hurtful because children of four and five years of age can read newspapers now and whenever they read anything in the newspaper they tend to believe it is true. Therefore our men are corrupting the minds of young children in this country by writing articles in newspapers giving young people the impression that the RBPF is no good. At a young age they are believing this foolishness, not realising that what is being written and printed is utter foolishness. When these children become 11 and 12 years old and the policemen say something to them

upon passing the streets and they respond obnoxiously, everyone will say that the child is wrong not realising it is not the youngster but those who planted the seed.

I am saying, Sir, we must make sure that whenever we see nonsense, we should speak out against it and not encourage it because our Policemen in Barbados are our brothers and sisters. Anyone who thinks anything about the Policemen, they think about us. Politicians should not join with anyone in speaking against the Policemen because they are the fastest for people to criticise. When someone joins the RBPF, the RBPF is thought to be good and people sometimes tend to believe that politicians are the worst people in the world. If we make those soundings right about the policemen, you can imagine what is going to be thought about politicians.

We must set a standard and we must make people understand that there is a limit to everything they want to do and they cannot continue to pull down our brothers and sisters. Many people would not realise this but the history of the world will prove, it is not the policeman one has to fear. It is the soldier. I have never seen a situation where the policeman believes that he wants to be the leader of a country. It is always the soldier who believes that.

A good example of that, Mr. Speaker, is in Pakistan now, Sir. All those who want to divide this country between the policemen and the soldiers, take warning. If you practise something you have to live with it and when you live with it, it destroys you also. A warning to the wise is good and the timing of it is proper.

We need to go back and equate the positions of the Commissioner of Police and the Brigadier, look at the compensations and tell me a Brigadier who has his troops, duties and his demands are not as great, but the Commissioner 24 hours a day is on call because something is happening, but yet still his compensation cannot be as good as the Brigadier.

The problem in Barbados is that we live in hope and when we see problems we cannot deal with them. The problem is we hope that we would go to war but we have crime today and do not want to deal with crime but we want to plan for a war. This is foolishness. Let us deal with what we have today. Let the Commissioner be empowered to do what he has to do and you cannot tell him to work and do not compensate him. At the same time the Brigadier has nothing to do and he is compensated.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Do you want me to carry that to a logical conclusion? I can do that for you. The Brigadier's duty is to take a troop to war. We have never gone to war. The Commissioner of Police is to uphold law

and order. He does it every day. I did that specially for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we must find a way as fast as possible - Sir, and I hope that the speech from the Honourable Member for St. Michael West will be accepted by his Side. In my opinion it was a brilliant speech and it was timely and it brought everybody back to basics. That is, people must understand that there is a role for the Police and we, as a Parliament cannot do anything to interfere with the role of the Police. I congratulate him on it. I have always said to him that he has a particular role to play in this Parliament and I am grateful to him today, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thank you very much.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel the need to speak in this debate because I sense an attitude that was represented in the words of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that unless they are addressed could create the basis for the destabilisation of this society.

It is a very dangerous thing, Mr. Speaker, for entities to seek to play off disciplined forces against each other.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that I am trying to destabilise the country. That is a very grave charge, Sir, and you know me quite well that I will never do a thing like that but if I have to speak in the interest of a particular group, or if I have to speak against a situation, that is my calling'. Whenever I get that calling, I will do it, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the attempt in trying to elevate the cause of the Police by downgrading the cause of the Defence Force in Barbados is unworthy. It does not matter from whence that uninspired attempt came. I sense in this debate the attitude of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to elevate the cause of the Police by having to deprecate the cause of the men of the Defence Force.

I want to start on that point, Sir, because I have- recently seen correspondence which should never have been written, to the effect that a disaffected Police is a threat to democracy. 2.55 p.m.

That is correspondence, Mr. Speaker, that was written and that caused a response from the Ministry of the Civil Service because there are many things that are threats to our democracy including grave fiscal disorder as we would have seen in the early 1990's.

This whole matter with the police has to be put within its proper context. There is a Police Act and section 8 of this Act rightly vests the command of the Force in the Commissioner of Police as it should be. Every disciplined force must function in a way that is different from the other institutions of the civil authority. No other entity, other than the Commissioner of Police should be responsible for the command of the Force. Command, here, Sir, has a specific meaning. No President of an Association should be able to determine if members of a disciplined force should work or not. The law is clear that the command of the Force is vested in the Commissioner. The Commissioner of the Police does not report to the Prime Minister nor does he report to the Minister of Home Affairs. The Police Act creates a relationship between the Commissioner of Police and the Governor-General.

"The Commissioner of Police shall have the command and superintendence of the Force, and shall be responsible to the Governor-General for the efficient administration and government of that Force..."

Section 45 of the Act defines the function of the Police Association. It is not a trade union, Mr. Speaker. It is not to function as a trade union or staff association. Section 45 of the Police Act prescribes that:

"For the purpose of enabling Inspectors, subordinate police officers and constables of the Force to consider and bring to the notice of the Commissioner and the Governor-General..."

Under law, the Police Association ought not to have any relationship with the Ministry of the Civil Service. The Ministry of the Civil Service hears the Police Association as a matter of courtesy because of convention contrary to law which has been established. However, on all matters affecting the Police of Barbados the correct line is by way of representations from the Police Association through the Commissioner of Police to His Excellency the Governor-General. It is an effrontery to the office of the Governor-General for what is taking place, to be allowed to take place, unless there is a change in the law. I made that point first of all because that is in many respects part of the difficulty in this matter. A society governed by the rule of the law must in every respect continue explicitly and implicitly to be governed by that rule of law. We begin to take providence, Mr. Speaker, when we have a law on the statutory book but we want to import into practice conventions that are at variance with that law. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that once this episode is over we will go back to the full application of the law.

As regard the matter concerning the welfare of the police, there is no disinclination on the part of the Government to treat seriously to matters affecting the welfare not only of the Police but also of the Defence Force

where men and women have to labour and put themselves at great risk without being the beneficiaries of a gratuity or pension - a serious disability.

There are serious disabilities being experienced with other members of the Barbadian society who have to work unsociable hours which also need to be corrected. I am speaking about the nurses and the firemen. Government's position in this matter is that we cannot just pick out one class and say that you are separate and special. We must recognise that there are groups of Barbadians who work in occupations where they have to keep unsociable hours, where they may face a threat to their life and limbs and where they require special training and special education in order to be able to function in those capacities. Therefore, we should treat them as a class rather than picking out one category, and say we are going to elevate you to the top of the file because you are in some respect different from the rest.

The issue in this particular matter with the police is that the police is not prepared to see that they share something in common with the members of the Barbados Defence Force who work unsociable hours as well, who as members of a disciplined force cannot join trade unions either and who have to receive special training. They are not prepared to see that they have a common cause with nurses or members of the Barbados Fire Service.

Government's position is, that rather than treat this matter in a piecemeal descriptive fashion they must be a comprehensive approach and only a comprehensive approach can suffice. We have already seen in 1988/89 the dangers of following the piecemeal approach to dealing not only with the issues concerning the welfare of the Police but the Civil Service in general. What you had in 1988 was a situation in which there was a partial regrading of the Civil Service in Barbados. There was a partial regrading of parts of the Royal Barbados Police Force and there were some categories of police at the top who, as a result of that regrading, went home with a bucket full of money. There were others at the bottom facing the criminals on the street who were left to suck salt, when the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) was denying that there were gangs in this country. That is the danger going back to this piecemeal approach to regrading people who face similar circumstances.

The Government has an obligation to govern effectively, sensibly and with fairness. We are not going to tell the Police that we are not going to treat their request for regrading with seriousness but we will treat it with the same seriousness as we will treat the request for regrading of everyone who is paid out of the same consolidated fund and has as legitimate a claim on those resources as the Police Force.

The notion that the Police cannot be compared with other people, is folly. You can obviously compare a person in the Police Force with a person in the Defence Force. You must be able to do that. Comparisons can be made on the basis of training, complexity of task, and degree of risk. Intuitively, the functions may be different but they are equivalent. The purpose of a regrading exercise is to establish a common basis for payment where there is an equivalence.

This country cannot benefit, Mr. Speaker, with people seeking to take the legitimate concerns of special groups and using them as the basis on which to inspire disaffection. I regret, Sir, the manner in which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke in which he tried to create a sense of disaffection between the Police and the members of the Defence Force because they face similar circumstances. When we ask the members of the Defence Force to go out with the police to do patrols - and they have been doing a magnificent job stopping the drugs at our borders - they face a similar difficulty.

I want to suggest to the House that Barbados owes a tremendous debt to the men and women who are serving in the Barbados Defence Force, who have done so without rancour but who are the only group of public officers who do so without benefit of gratuity or pension. It is a very serious disability that has to be dealt with. I must tell you that the Attorney-General and I have asked the Defence Force to prepare for us a paper for consideration by the Defence Board to rectify that very dangerous deficiency. It is wrong to ask a person to serve in a manner in which the defence personnel are supposed to serve and he or she goes home without a gratuity or a pension. It is a very wrong thing. It has to be rectified.

Sir, I want to make some clarity to this matter. The Police Association has before the Government a request for salary increases and for improved allowances which are being dealt with. They have also participated in the negotiations for the repayment of the 8%. What we will not agree with, is that we will treat the regrading of the Police by a process different from that which we are treating regrading in the public service in general. Sir, from as far back as November last year, the Ministry of the Civil Service has told all of the public sector unions, the Government is prepared to deal with the regrading of public officers but we are going to deal with it as one comprehensive exercise. 3.05 p.m.

I therefore hope, Mr. Speaker, that this agitation that has been inspired in Barbados, prompted by the notion that the police regrading must take precedent over all other regradings in the Public Service of Barbados, must stop. I

want to repeat that, Sir. The agitation is taking place over the question of regrading now when we have set in train a process for comprehensive regrading of the entire Civil Service. If that process had not been set in train, if they had been told the Government is not going to consider regrading at all, then there might be an issue but we have told them that regrading is going to take place but let us deal with it scientifically, sensitively and in a comprehensive manner.

I stress the point, Mr. Speaker, because, as I said, I have recently seen correspondence speaking about disaffection in the Police Force being a threat to democracy. None of us in this House needs to be reminded, that is true, but no disciplined force must ever feel it is in a position to hold a government to ransom merely because it is a disciplined force. This is true, whether we are speaking about the Police Force, the Defence Force, the Fire Service or the Cadets. They have to function as disciplined forces representing the legitimacy of a civil authority.

It is a serious point, Sir, because once we open up this floodgate that disciplined forces will have their needs met through disaffection and agitation we open up avenues for anarchy in this country. I do not think that any reasonable person can question that. Once you allow it, all is lost.

I just want to say therefore, Mr. Speaker, that as regards to the function of the police there is a thing called the Police Act. That Act will have to be the basis upon which matters pertaining to the police are administered until the Act is changed. The more I see these informal arrangements that are based upon convention but not on statute, the more I am satisfied that the sooner we get back within the four corners of the law the better, and I am very serious about that point. If we need to change the role of the Police Association then let us do it by law. We are a society governed by the rule of law but when we import into our affairs conventions of whatever worth, then we are into a free-for-all in which the devil will take the hindmost.

I am sure that I speak for all sensible Members of this House when I say that is what we do not want for this country. I have spoken to this matter directly, Mr. Speaker, but I very much regret that there could have been in this country a situation which obtained a few weeks ago on a matter that was so contrary to law and I must say so, Sir. Let me be frank, there was an agitation and a sickout in the Police Force, no matter what you want to call it, in circumstances where the relevant line of communication should not have been between the Police Force and the Ministry of the Civil Service but the Police Force through their Commissioner to the Governor-General. I am very serious that we must have the Police Force functioning within the four corners of the law.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Peter is misleading the House. He is giving an opinion that he is not qualified to give when he said there was a sickout.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point of order, Sir?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Peter said that there was a sickout when to the best of my knowledge the police were sick and that is above his competence.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy may want to continue to deal with fiction as is his political right. I cannot educate him to what he is to believe and what he is not to believe. I know a sickout when I see one and everybody in this House knows a sickout when they see one. Everybody in Barbados would be surprised to feel that politicians are so intimidated and so afraid of the truth that we cannot say there was a sickout in the Police Force when there was a sickout in the Police Force. What foolishness have we come to? There was a sickout in the Police Force full stop. It is not a question of being ashamed. That was the truth. You may want to varnish it over with all kinds of bureaucratic and administrative talk but that was the reality.

The point I am coming to, Mr. Speaker, is that there is a Police Act that governs the functioning of the Police Force. If something is unsatisfactory about the Act, let us change it but do not let us begin to import conventions merely because they can be popular but are unlawful. There are provisions in the Police Force Act and let us continue to follow them.

I just want to close by saying, Mr. Speaker, that this Government has made every effort within the limits of its fiscal resources over the course of the last five years to substantially improve the conditions of the Police Force whether it would be in terms of improving their physical conditions - I must say those in St. Philip have been improved, St. George, Belleplaine, Boarded Hall, Worthing and Hastings. In all these matters the long-suffering people of St. Peter have been the last to be addressed.

I can confirm, Sir, that in the sense of the economy that has been exercised in public expenditure, in St. Peter rather than building a brand new building to house the police there was a building that was built by the Ministry of Public Works many years ago intending to be a mechanical workshop next to the Speightstown Bus Terminal - it has never been used. It was built by a previous administration - we have identified that building, intended to be a mechanical workshop for the Public Works, to be redesigned and to become a new District "E" in St. Peter.

I am just stressing the point, sir, that the physical conditions under which the police in this country have functioned in the last five years have been substantially

improved. We have also improved substantially the allowances paid to the police. We have increased the allowances in 1995 and again in 1998. They have shared in every wage increase.

I can reaffirm that the Government is committed to providing the Royal Barbados Police Force with all such sufficient financial and other resources as will enable it to successfully carry out an aggressive fight against criminal and violent behaviour in this country. We are resolutely committed to that.

The Minister of Home Affairs has been given the approval to introduce an extraordinary initiative to battle criminal behaviour down to the ground and the Cabinet is fully resolved to give the financial resources to get the job done. There is no inclination on the part of this Administration to be miserly where the police is concerned but, at the same time, we have a responsibility to govern the entire society and to treat other longstanding cases of deficiencies and disability in the same way. I can only therefore tell the Police, Mr. Speaker, and I will close on this note, that they must find common cause with other persons working in similar circumstances whose claim on the Treasury is equally justified. When they find that common cause, the Government will embrace them in the comprehensive approach and will insist on bringing to bear what we regard as a common problem of putting those persons in the disciplined forces in Barbados and those sections in the Barbadian society who have to function in the public service under unsociable conditions right for the first time.

I am obliged to you, Sir.
3.15p.m.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the issues relating to the police and the operations of the police, particularly in the context of the numerous sick certificates which made their various ways into the system thereby facilitating legitimate leave since there were sick certificates, has excited much public attention and debate.

I think that it spoke to an issue which I am seeing develop and for which I have some high degree of concern. That is, where groups within the Civil Service have a legitimate claim in some instances for improved terms and conditions, they use the method of sick-outs or strikes almost as a weapon in situations where sometimes there is not even a disputed matter arising between the two parties.

We have seen this in relation to several instances over the course of the last few months and over the course of this year and last year where sometimes there is a narrow issue dividing the public sector agency, the particular individual department and the Ministry of the Civil Service where,

perhaps, the issue has gone from the client Ministry on to the Ministry of the Civil Service. Perhaps they are taking a little long to respond or they are looking at the issues and promising to get back but the individual group still persists in going out on strike, virtually holding the Government and the public in particular at ransom until their issue is dealt with. We have seen it with several groups over the course of this year and in one instance where the trade union said that the issues on which they came out on strike were 99.9% resolved but they were escalating the strike the next day. That is the nature of the environment in which we are dealing these days and it was of concern to see the way in which, certainly from the perspective of the observer, the whole issue with the police emerged and the public discussions that have followed the issue.

Indeed, in here today we saw the various sides reflected. I wish to speak to the whole issue of the police from a totally different perspective and context because I believe that the role of police in a changing and sophisticated society has to go beyond the investigation of crime, the detection of crime, the prevention of crime or even the solution of crime. It has to move towards the wider social function, given the social cultural context and, indeed, the socio-economic climate in which the police are called on to perform.

I want to start my comments by saying that I believe the police do have a legitimate case for having improved terms and conditions but I think it must be gone about in the correct way. In particular, there is yet one issue that I have not heard anybody speak to that I feel very strongly about and which I would wish to put on the table for public discussion.

I am talking about the issues of compensation for victims of violent crimes. The reality is that the incidents of crime and violence in this society, outside of the election campaign - we have to look at what the reality is - the issue of crime and violence is of great concern to the average Barbadian. People are talking about it. People are concerned about their safety and the safety and welfare of their children. Very much as the health care stands as we perceive between ourselves and our mortality, the police force in very much the same way stands between us and the safety of life and limb. Those persons who must put their lives and limbs on the line to protect the wider society in a culture today where there is little respect for authority figures. Before, people used to say to a policeman, "yes sir, no sir, no please" now people abuse policemen and pelt them even when they are in uniforms and attempting to carry out legitimately their function. In that kind of climate we have to look at what methods we can put in place that give protection to these policemen that would encourage them not only to have a high degree of job satisfaction but would create the kind of climate in which they want to work and want to protect the wider society.

They are not going to do that and do it willingly unless they feel that they are sufficiently secure and protected. In this regard, I would wish to urge that the Government take the opportunity to look at putting in place some kind of compensation fund or insurance policy for police officers and for those officers who are members of military and paramilitary services whose lives and limbs are particularly at risk by the very nature of the work that they do. We have already had at the prison, a prison officer being killed by an inmate in the execution of his duty. Over the course of the last few years, as people have become less respectful of authority figures and in fact people have become more confrontational in their approach to issues and less willing to resolve issues through discussion, we have seen police officers killed in the course of their duties. We have seen police officers physically hurt by persons who consider themselves aggrieved or just do not like policemen as they go about their work.

I believe that if such a fund were put in place not only would we be thinking in terms of compensating the victims of violent crimes but we have to recognise that every policeman and every prison officer is potentially a victim of violent crime because they are the ones who are out there dealing with the criminals and seeking to prevent the wider society from various kinds of criminal activity. They can only do so against the background where they are sufficiently secure in the execution of their function that they do them thoroughly, willingly and knowing that if something should happen to them that they are sufficiently secure with an insurance policy or their wives and children and their families are made secure and will not suffer because the principal breadwinner or one of the breadwinners of the household is injured on the job.

I feel very strongly about this. At the same time I deeply feel that the police themselves must be careful about the manner in which they execute their duties and functions, whether it is the way in which they are bringing respect to themselves as individuals and to other members of the Force or whether they execute their functions in such a way that alienates communities, that alienates particular individuals and creates a climate of hostility between individual citizens and those persons in uniform who symbolise the Force.

Very often, within certain social communities in Barbados we get the complaint that police come into these communities with particular attitudes towards individuals and towards residents of the area that do not foster good community relations in any event once these very poor attitudes are demonstrated. You see them particularly in housing areas where there is a perception that these people are 'nobodies' and they can be treated very badly. Frequently, the complaints of socially ostracised communities are really very severe in relation to how they are treated by policemen.

The attitude is very different when the policemen come into areas like where I live or where some members of this particular House live. That is the reality. It is something which we have to deal with. That is the reality. It is something which we have deal with because all citizens are responsible for paying the police force and are equally entitled to protection, respect, courtesy and all the benefits given by the law and by the officers charged with the responsibility of carrying out that. 3.25 p.m.

While I am in this vein, let me make the point that the time is coming...

Asides.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, I do very little criminal law practice. When I left practice in 1994 I had reached the conclusion that the accused were getting younger and younger and less and less remorseful. Their mothers were running behind them holding their bellies, having to pay and in some instances the accused had no remorse at all and I decided that I would not do a lot of criminal work. However, every legal practitioner in Bridgetown is aware that in relation to violent crimes, more so than crimes involving money, the police rely on very little investigative techniques or skills but the level of violence alleged to be applied are severe. In some instances, there are particular police stations that have developed reputations for being 'beat centres'. That is a reality. If that is the perception in the wider community, Mr. Speaker, then the persons in the police force will not get the co-operation and respect of the citizens unless that attitude is changed, unless police rely on greater and genuine investigative technique that move beyond the fist, the bottle and various instruments of extraction of confession.

Asides.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, the stories are really not pleasant. Unless that image is transformed, I am saying, Sir, that what we have to do is two things. There are certain benefits which need to be put in place to make sure that the police have the correct equipment, resources and financial protection to carrying out a job in a changing society and even in a dangerous society where the arsenals of the criminals are more sophisticated and better equipped than the arsenals of the police themselves. At the same time there is a heavy onus on those members of the police force to conduct themselves in such a way *vis-a-vis* individual citizens that respect is given to them and to the wider police force so that they earn the co-operation of the average citizen. I believe that in this matter we really have to have regard to both sides of the coin.

Sir, in relation to speaking about equipping the police force for the job that they are going to do, I am strongly of

the view that we really need to ask ourselves the question - what kind of society are the police going to function in, in the new millennium? It is only when we ask that question that we can then determine what the human resource needs of the police force will be. How best can they be equipped, to deal with the kind of criminal problems that will be generated into the next millennium?

The police force is the largest single public service entity or grouping in Barbados, having 1 450 people. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital has a staff of 2 000, it is the largest single entity in terms of employees but it has many categories. Here you have 1 450 people including about 200 special constables who are classified as police. This is a large group but yet there is no Human Resources Department at the police headquarters. This is even against the background where we are speaking about an era of public sector reform. Public sector reform must start with those agencies which have high contact with the wider public. If you have 1 450 people interfacing with the wider public in one way or another, then their human resource needs have to be adequately addressed.

What are the issues which are going to be generated in this new millennium? Is there going to be a greater instance of white collar crime, and of what type? What kind of training do you have to give policemen to deal with that? There are all of these sophisticated criminal returnees from England and the United States who are bringing back attitudes, techniques and a criminal mind that we perhaps do not have here. How are we training our policemen to deal with those?

As we move into a more technologically advanced age where money is being transferred all over the world with a switch of a finger and the press of a button on a computer system, how are our policemen going to be equipped to deal with that kind of white collar crime? A lot of the crime is going to relate to intellectual property and financial services.

Barbados is promoted more as a financial service sector and the type of crime that we are going to see will relate to that sector where money is moving. Anyone can get good computer skills, one does not have to have a degree to get these skills. Little children can do some of the most sophisticated and fascinating things with computers. Sooner or later, some of the criminals are going to start saying - why should I break in at Ms. Smith's shop when I can get a computer and if Barclays Bank is transferring \$2 million to CIBC tonight, I can transfer that to an account which I have set up? It can all be done electronically in a way that is difficult to trace - a code is broken, the money is pulled and transferred to an account and the person is gone clean and cannot be traced. How are we training our policemen to deal with that?

The police force has 300 personnel per division and apart from training and the human resource issues that will be churned up in that system, which has 1 450 people, there must be myriad human resource issues to deal with as well. There may be issues relating to vacation, pay or sick leave but it is a tremendous range of issues that will be generated by a force of that sort. The one personnel officer who is now there cannot adequately cope and is not trained to deal with the issue such as career path development. He is not trained to deal with issues of job satisfaction and performance appraisal systems and that is the way in which I understand we are going in the public sector.

A human resources department needs to be put in place as a matter of urgency if we are going to adequately address the issue being raised by the policemen. My experience on the front bench has taught me that if things were dealt with at junior levels or by the correct personnel within the system that they would not have to become acrimonious issues. Therefore, the Minister would not be embroiled in some kind of agitation through an issue not being dealt with, which was a legitimate ground held by an individual and which could have been dealt with had there been adequate staffing or adequate resources at a lower level.

The police force is going to have to be equipped with psychologists to deal with the problems which the policemen themselves have. There is no way that you can be doing that kind of stressful job everyday, working those kinds of hours constantly and not yourself have certain emotional and psychological needs that are not being addressed. It is not fair that the policemen, having got these problems at work should then have to go at their own expense and pay for counselling.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. James South is misleading the House by giving the impression that the police force do not have a provision for policemen to go to doctors on a yearly basis. I would like the Honourable Member to correct that.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy can appreciate the difference but there really is a difference between having access to a doctor on a yearly basis and having trained psychologists on the force who, if there is a problem on the job can deal with it there and then. He may or may not appreciate the difference; it is hard to tell with him, Sir. 3.35p.m.

I am making the point, Sir, about the human resource development, career paths and performance appraisal. Another issue in the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) for many policemen is the issue of transparency in the way that matters are dealt with. This is a problem in that they

think the internal forces are convoluted. They do not know how decisions about their future and careers are made. They want to have carefully structured career paths that have certain objective criteria that they are aware of and systems that facilitate promotions that are transparent. For example, they can know how 'Sargeant X' got to be picked or how somebody else became a sargeant over them. These are real issues for the individual who is out there working everyday in any structure where the base is so large and the hierarchial structure so narrow that the opportunities of rising to the top are therefore limited.

Outside of that one of the other concerns, and it arises naturally, would be the whole issue of succession planning within the RBPF and I am linking that to training. The nature of the society that you anticipate and the nature of the crime that you will have, will determine how many people you train and the type of training that you give them and then who are the persons who will be trained to move into the upper positions in the RBPF.

It is of great concern to me and I think should be to this Honourable House that persons feel alienated within the Force as a result of not having sufficient opportunities. As I understand it, Sir, for the person in the Civil Service who is a teacher, if you have a degree then you receive some sort of compensation for your degree or you may get an increment for additional training that you undergo. That is not the case with the RBPF. There are persons who of their own ambition are going out there and doing training to improve themselves and bring a higher level of skill to the Force, they receive no recognition, no remuneration or compensation for that training. As a result, at a time when we are predicting that there will be greater sophistication in crime and therefore a need for highly trained personnel, what we are seeing is a massive retreat away from the RBPF.

Within the course of the last couple of years, the RBPF has lost 14 attorneys, two trained social workers, a trained accountant and a person with a Masters Degree in Computer Studies. This is a significant amount of trained personnel that have been lost to the RBPF. I am told that is result of people not having job satisfaction, not being properly remunerated, not being properly compensated for their training and having little or no opportunity for promotion no matter what training they do.

The RBPF has to have and retain a cadre of highly trained specialists in various fields if in fact the Force is to meet the challenges of crime in the new millennium and therefore every step necessary to ensure that we not only train these people, but we retain them within the Force is of utmost importance.

In the context of where we are going in the new millennium the Honourable Member for St. Michael West raised the point. Globalisation is going to mean that there is

a movement not only of personnel worldwide but of information, money and resources of various types and hence that too is going to have an impact on the nature of crime that we are seeking.

The whole issue of training and World Trade Organization again will have implications for the type of crime. What will be offensive in certain settings? What will be the new economic crime that will emerge in the new millennium as the whole financial order of the world changes? All of these are considerations to which we must have regard if we are going to truly have a Barbadian Police Force that can function in a society that is becoming increasingly sophisticated.

On the whole issue of training, Sir, again I spoke to the need for retaining those persons who go out and do degrees, persons who are trained in that way, but in-service training is also a very important issue. There was a time when Barbados would have qualified for certain concessionary training for members of the RBPF in both the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom. However, because of our new financial rating internationally, we do not qualify for a lot of concessions, whether it is aide at a certain level and certain types of training courses and it is particularly so in relation to the RBPF.

It seems to me that if there is going to be a gap, not in the gazetted officers but a gap in the in-service training of the men in the ranks, then the Regional Training School or alternatively some system set up within the Force itself, must pick up the slack to ensure that there is continued training for policemen who are not gazetted.

Very often when you ask persons what they want in their jobs, they do not always tell you or they do not say only increase cash in hand. It is recognition for certain work done. It is recognition for training that they undertake of their own volition, it is getting training opportunities while they work to enhance their skills, to give them greater self-esteem and to further equip them for the jobs that they are doing on a daily basis.

The whole issue of training in the resources department to which I have been speaking and in the wider context has got to be looked at in two contexts:

1. The short fall in terms of the concessionary courses which we used to have access to, but no longer do.
2. In the context of what it is we want to train the police to do in the future.

I started by speaking in terms of the social issues with which the Police have to deal, the way in which they deal with domestic matters and the way in which they deal with the boys on the block. Sir, I represent one of those

constituencies which have a mammoth housing area. The whole issue of social relations in Barbados in various types of residential developments is really a very interesting matter because, we complain constantly about how the boys can be found on the block, but yet we build residential developments without sufficient recreational facilities. If there are ten people living in a two bedroom house or ten people living in a three bedroom unit, or in some cases, as I have in my constituency, 30 and 20 people living in a three bedroom unit, where are they to go except on the block? There is no recreational facility.

They bump into each other when they are awake and in the house, There are people sleeping on the living room floor, that is the reality. People are sleeping two and three to a bed, so when they get up and want some space they cannot find it in their house. There is no backyard for them to find it. If they want to see a girl, they have to go on the block.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes to conclude, please.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Yes. Thank you, Sir.

The fellows are on the block. Therefore when the policeman comes into that environment and he sees people on the block, he suspects they are going to be smoking herb and that they are going to be doing this and that.

You have to understand the social setting on which people are on the block and therefore, the nature of the interface that the policemen are going to have in relation to understanding psychological issues and in understanding the problems that returning nationals and the homeless bring with them. All of these are the softer issues. These are not necessarily criminal issues. These have to do now with the human interface. They have to do with understanding the psychology and the social cultural context of the country in which you lived and work. These are part of the critical issues which policemen are going to have to be trained to come to grips with. 3.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am one who always listens to you, and as much as I have other things that I would wish to speak to under this, I will take my seat, Sir, as you have indicated that I have no more time.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I rise to wind up this debate and I wish to thank the last Honourable Member who spoke. That is one of the most stirring, intelligent and comprehensive speeches that I have ever heard in here in half of an hour on the Police Force. It is a tour de force.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, I am talking about the Honourable Member for St. James South because I heard a lot of it, all about the human resource department. Of course, the Honourable Member would have known that as a Member of the front bench that this is something we have been asking for, for a long time. Many of these government departments with large complements of personnel should have a separate resource department. The Prisons is one. It is ridiculous that the Superintendent of Prisons has to approve every application for vacation leave and sick leave and at the same time somebody comes and they want two tins of paint and he has to sign a Local Purchase Order (LPO). He does not have a secretary to type for him and this is bad.

In some ministries, a case is made for a charge officer. The Honourable Member for St. James South spoke very fairly because she looked at the requirements of the Force in the next century and the need for specialize training to cope with the sophistication of the contemporary criminal. I wish to assure her however, that this Government has increased the level of training for the Police Force in the last four years. I had planned to bring the number of police officers who have been trained in the past four years but the lady who was working on it was not able to complete the list. I hope to get it perhaps in time for the 14th when we come back.

On that note, I have a very important announcement to make. In my opening, I said that the Police Force has benefitted greatly from training opportunities locally, regionally, - especially in Jamaica at their facility Red Track and in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. We have had a good relationship with the United States of America and they have provided a large amount of training on a regular basis for the police officers of Barbados. Some of that training has been as a result of an agreement which the Government of Barbados has executed every year with the United States of America. Under that agreement, they offer about US\$ 130 000 in training and other assistance to the police particularly in the area of drugs and money laundering. However, this year, Barbados has rejected that offer of assistance from the United States Government. I believe we are the only country that has had the courage to do that. I will give you the background.

On Friday, October 1st, the last Friday that I had of my holiday in London, my Permanent Secretary called me to say that he had received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for my comments, an agreement tendered by the Government of the United States of America. I told him, "I am coming home on Monday, this is Friday, could it not wait." He said, "No, it cannot wait." I asked him "why not?" He said, "the Americans are insisting that it be signed today." I asked him

if it is the usual one that we sign every year. He said "Yes, but, there are a couple of things that worry me." I told him to read them to me. Among the things he read was this. "The parties, that is the Government of the United states and the Government of Barbados, understand and agree;

- a. The United States Government (USG) assistance to the drug and crime control effort of the Government of Barbados is conditioned on the Government of Barbados actively protecting human rights of all persons within Barbados; and
- b. In accordance with the United States law and policy, no United States Government (USG) assistance or funds will be provided under this agreement to or for use by a unit of the security forces of the Government of Barbados if the US Secretary of State has credible evidence that such a unit has committed gross violations of human rights, unless the US Secretary of State determines that the Government of Barbados is taking effective measures to bring the responsible members of the security forces unit to justice. The parties understand and agree that "effective measures" means that the Government of Barbados is carrying out a credible investigation and that the individuals involved face appropriate disciplinary action or impartial prosecution in accordance with local law.

I asked him to read that to me again. I told him, "No, tell them we cannot sign that today". He told me he would speak to them and see if they could wait until the Monday. He called me back about half of an hour later and said, "No, it must be signed today, take it or leave it". I told him to tell the United States of America Government to keep the US\$130 000. I could not submit any security force in Barbados to the kind of arbitration by the US Secretary of State as to whether Barbados is complying with human rights norms or taking effective measures to carry out credible investigations. Who is to determine whether an investigation by the Police Force in Barbados is credible or not, the US Secretary of State? It is an effrontery. I am sorry, Sir, we will have to find the BDS\$ 260 000 out of Government's budget. I could not allow the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Government of Barbados to sign an agreement like this which I think impinges on the sovereignty of Barbados. It is an insult to us. I do not care what other people have gone and sign, that is a matter for them. 3.55p.m.

There was another part of it, Sir, that would require any police officer who was getting training from the US Government to be very careful and this is usual but they have gone further this year. They were saying that:

"The U.S. Government reserves the right to terminate assistance provided under this agreement or take other appropriate measures if an agency of the Government of Barbados, to or through which assistance is being..."
Something is left out here.

"....this agreement or a key individual of such agency or any recipient of scholarships, fellowships or training is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offence or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in the U.S. Code."

I did not mind that too much but the one about human rights. Who gives the U.S. the moral authority to speak about human rights in relation to Barbados? Who gives them the moral authority to speak about human rights in a security force having regard to what we know has happened in Los Angeles and has been exposed recently, what we know happened with Rodney King and what we know happened with the Haitian who was buggered with a piece of wood? Who are there?

Sir, I am just letting the House know because you may hear at some time that Barbados did not sign it. I have a duty to tell the people's representatives why it was my judgment and my advice that we should not sign that kind of agreement for US\$130 000.

We are going to do the range at the Police Training School. The Police need a proper range to shoot on. I have approved for work to start on that shortly so they can go up there, practise and get proficient in shooting at the Regional Police Training Centre.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James South had mentioned about an insurance scheme. This is one of the matters we are pursuing in discussions with the Police Association. We had asked them to get some information and quotations for us on group policies that would cover them in the event of injuries received while on duty.

Mr. Speaker, for all that has been said, it is my sincere opinion that policing can still offer a worthwhile livelihood to young people in our society. In fact, policing is so technical and so specialised that it is truly a profession. One laments from time to time that people are trained in the Force in particular disciplines and leave but, on the other hand, I see nothing wrong with that,

My Department has been the beneficiary of officers who have trained as lawyers and then come into the Attorney General's Chambers or the DPP's office. It would be a human being of little esteem who does not have for himself an ambition to go further in life as opportunities may present themselves.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member is saying, Sir, that even in politics people on the back bench want to get onto the front bench. We have in here in a different capacity a gentleman who was an Immigration Officer who became a lawyer. So long as human beings have ambition and a desire to improve themselves, the system must be so organised as to provide opportunities for the full flowering of that ambition.

We have a system of tertiary education that is free in Barbados and if a police officer wishes - I have known police officers who have started with CXC's, "O" levels, and then gone to the Community College and done the "A" levels.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: The "O" Level Institute first.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The "O" Level Institute first, Sir. Thank you. Then they go to the Law Faculty, get the LL.B., go to Trinidad and qualify as lawyers. What is wrong with that?

I have discussed with the Commissioner from time to time, and it is something for the Force to advise me on, whether it would not be possible to have two streams. It was tried in the past where there were accelerated promotion systems. Apparently they did not work well.

In the Metropolitan Police in England many of the detective inspectors and people at that level are persons who have graduated from Oxford and Cambridge, not Wolverhampton, working as detective inspectors.

We have to continue to make the Force attractive to young people. I believe we even have two persons of Indian extract in the Force. I do not think we have any persons of the Caucasian extract but more and more the Force must reflect the society. We cannot force people to join but we can encourage them to join by making the salaries and allowances attractive.

Sir, you heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister speak. The Government is committed to making things attractive and making conditions more congenial. All we are asking the police to do is to recognise that their case is going to be dealt with all the others because the experience of 1990 when a few policemen at the top including the then Commissioner walked away at December 1990, the year before the elections with additional pay, some due in excess of \$30 000. The policemen at the bottom never got a cent.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not know who is to blame. We were not the Government. You were the Government and you were trying to win an election in a couple of months.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas is misleading the House. He said we regraded the police at the top in order to win the Government. As you are aware, I was not in here or we would never imply that a government would use a system to win a government like how they did in 1999. We would never imply that - with NHC.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There is an imputation and I am imputing improper motives not to the Honourable Member since he was not here but to the other Honourable Members. I withdraw the imputation, Sir. It was just that the two events happened very closely one upon the other. I unfortunately drew the inference and I -should not have drawn it. I would just put the two events there. 4.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I think all the matters that I wanted to address I have dealt with. I thank Honourable Members on this Side and on the Other Side who have contributed to this debate. I can assure them that some of the points they have made will be given due consideration by the Ministry.

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

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

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

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Police (Amendment) Act.

ORDER NO. 5 - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE \$70 335

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, despite the elegant exterior, the official residence at Ilaro Court is in fairly desperate states. Even as I am speaking to you there is extensive work going on to correct the electricals. It was in danger of being condemned by the Government Electrical Department as a fire hazard. The roof is in need of repair and it leaks. I have had to move out of the official residence and, in fact, I am now living at my home which is far more convenient for me.

The fact is that Ilaro Court is public property and much as we have sought to economise on it, a time comes when funds have to be spent on it. Most of the improvement at Ilaro Court over the last five years have been by way of gifts through the Ilaro Court Foundation which is a foundation registered as a charity through which many persons in the private sector have made generous contributions to keep it in a certain state. On the occasion of the visit of the President of the United States of America the Ilaro Court Foundation came through.

The point is that important remedial works are taking place to make sure that the property is liveable. The entire electricals had to be replaced and the roof will have to be replaced. The Ministry of Public Works in dealing with the electricals is also expanding the kitchen that is used for official purposes. I want to stress that point because there are two kitchens. One is a kitchenette which is private but the kitchen that we are talking about here is the one that is used for ceremonial and official purposes. That was found to be inadequate to handle any large gathering at Ilaro Court and what is being proposed by the Ministry of Public Works is to replace what was the official kitchen with one that is more appropriate as part of the general refurbishment of the building.

I imagine, Sir, that it is something that has to be done piecemeal over the course of the next few years. The roof, as I said, Sir, is leaking and will have to be replaced. I am not anticipating any extravagance. The roof, the electricals and the kitchen that is used for ceremonial purposes will have to be replaced.

As I said, it has been the beneficiary of certain gifts organised through the Foundation but the truth is that it is public property and it is an asset to the country that I think we have an obligation to maintain. I have tried to use it in a manner that is a credit to the country and I have tried to make it a place that Barbadians feel that they can come to and be part of something that is good and special.

I am not going to be involved in any extravagance in it. This is to make sure that the kitchen used for official purposes not for the private purposes can suffice when we have official functions at Ilaro Court.

The House must be aware that in the months ahead the roof will have to be replaced and the Ministry of Public Works does the work. The work of replacing the electricals will continue. This is necessary expenditure. It happened without my prior approval. In fact, I have been very draconian in the way public funds have been spent on Ilaro Court and had I been aware of this, I might not even have approved of it but this is necessary as is the expenditure on the roof because it is leaking. I have had to go back to my own residence and I am glad where I am. I give the House the assurance that I will never so get attached to the trappings of office that I will have any difficulty in leaving the office. 4.15 p.m.

I promise you of that, Sir. I will never get so attached to the cars and the artificial trappings of the office that I will not know how to live in my own house or to drive myself. Ilaro Court is public property and I beg to move that Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have no intentions of opposing this particular Head but we will raise some concerns. I am grateful to the Right Honourable Prime Minister for admitting to this House that the roof on the kitchen needs changing.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Is it the entire roof of the House? Sir, that makes it even more ridiculous because anybody who knows anything about electrical equipment

would tell you that before you install those pieces of equipment, the roof should be changed first. Whoever went about making these changes, will be putting us in jeopardy. Sir, \$70 000, as you know, is not a small sum of money. This is the cost of a house for a poor person. If we are to take off a roof at Ilaro Court and leave this equipment exposed, one would have thought....

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speaks now, as he will speak in the future, as a person who is not familiar with Ilaro Court. The kitchen that is used for official functions has heavy duty equipment. It is not an ordinary kitchen for a private family. It is in the basement of a three storey building and it is not going to be exposed to the roof.

Sir, I want to make this point. This is not a kitchen for my personal use. This is the kitchen that is used when there are 2000 persons and the equipment therefore has to be considered in that context.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am happy that the Prime Minister has assured the House that this kitchen is not for the usage of Ilaro Court and that it for the use of those people who want to do fund-raising.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member did not say that. Sir, the Prime Minister was away when this matter came to Cabinet and I take full responsibility for approving it. When you have a large gathering on the lawn, they must be fed from somewhere. If there are not tents on the lawn, they must be fed from the kitchen in Ilaro Court. Let us put it this way. It is a kind of commercial kitchen that is bigger than the ordinary kitchen. There must be a dishwasher, a proper stove, fridge and microwave. That is the purpose of this.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, anybody realizing that you are spending \$70,334.29 to upgrade kitchen equipment would have to know that it cannot be a kitchen to cook for a husband and wife. It would have to be a kitchen to cater for large numbers of people commercially and otherwise.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is also for fund-raising. Nobody can deny that Ilaro Court has been used for fund-raising lately. Nobody can deny that. I do not understand why the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is unhappy because I spoke in that light and feels that he has to explain something to me that is obvious to me and not obvious to his Side. It is very obvious to me.

When there is a situation, Mr. Chairman, that equipment - not the building - is costing over \$70 000 and poor people cannot get a house, it is obvious that the equipment should be itemized. I would ask the Prime Minister but I have said to him that he should not introduce this Bill because he was not here and he did not do it. He should leave it to the Attorney-General who was the Acting Prime Minister to tell us what is the equipment that is going into Ilaro Court that would cost \$70 000. When the example is looked at in the Budget for land and house for a poor person, it is \$15 000 more. Leave that to the Attorney-General to explain because I need to know what type of equipment will cost this amount.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thanks to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for stating that this is only equipment and not tiles. It also means that we must come back and put air-conditioning units in because of the amount of equipment, the room needs to be cooled in view of the fact that it is three storeys down. There will be a supplementary some time later for air-conditioning, since it is not at ground level and the kitchen must be cooled down.

Sir, there should have been a supplementary list telling us how the money is being spent. We know that is for equipment but it should show the cost of the particular pieces of equipment or give us a list of the equipment that will be installed in this particular area, bearing in mind that we were told that there are simply upgrading the kitchen. That there was one there and it was not adequate.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Is it not the residence of the Prime Minister anymore?

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I see, the parking facilities there are better than elsewhere so it will be used more than elsewhere. I now understand and I am grateful to you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The cheap shots of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy do not bother me. Ilaro Court has been used for fundraising. It is the property of the people of Barbados and over the course of the last five years we have had a policy that I will not depart from, that national institutions that are involved in charitable purposes - and they must be national - can, from time to time, have access to the property at Ilaro Court to raise funds to carry out charitable purposes. Every year there is a function at Ilaro Court called Carols by Candle Light by Rotary which is a charitable group. Sir, it is not for profit. Every year, thousands of Barbadians gather

there to subscribe to activities by charitable groups. The purpose of using the facilities there is to help advance the cause of poor people in this country. Schools have also participated in events at Ilaro Court and the proceeds go to the school to help develop their programmes.

I want to make the point that there is a commercial kitchen at Ilaro Court merely because there must be a commercial kitchen when dealing with thousands of people. Sometimes there are as many as five thousand people attending functions at Ilaro Court. One of the Rotary's activities must have at least ten thousand people. It is a commercial kitchen not because a profit is made from it but because it has to deal with large numbers.

Mr. Chairman, as I have said, I have been very parsimonious in dealing with the needs of Ilaro Court over the course of the last five years. I have not sought to make the living quarters more comfortable. I have never brought to this House any request to make my own circumstances at Ilaro Court more comfortable and I will never do so. As I have said, I will never get so attached to the trappings of my office to make me a fool about them and to make me not comfortable about going back to private life. This is not about improving the private facilities at Ilaro Court. It is a large kitchen that is used to handle that fare for very large numbers.

The Ministry of the Public Works did a survey and one day I heard that they had pulled down the kitchen. This matter did not originate with me but with the Ministry of the Public Works. The Ministry of Public Works also has responsibility to deal with the maintenance of Ilaro Court. They did an inspection of the electrical fittings and said the place should be condemned because it is a fire hazard. They are repairing the electrical fittings. Sir, they have also looked at the roof and said the roof needs to be repaired.

These are not extravagances. Sir, I am not building a swimming pool or improving the personal circumstances of the Prime Minister in the residential part. I am improving that part of it that is used for protocol. When President Clinton came to Barbados and had lunch at Ilaro Court, this is the kitchen from which he was served. When President Castro came, Sir, this is where he was served from. When there are official functions at Ilaro Court, this is where people are served from. If I invite my private friends to Ilaro Court, there is a small kitchenette from which they are served.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member will be confused because he wants to make it a political issue. People in Barbados have come, I believe, to have a

relationship with Ilaro Court where they understand that it is open to the people. It is not my private property, Sir, but I have responsibility to maintain it and to maintain its value as public property. 4.25 p.m.

It is depreciating now and if we do not spend money on it, it will depreciate more quickly. If we do not fix the roof, Sir, then there will be further depreciation in public property. If we do not replace this old kitchen, there will be depreciation in public property. If we do not change the electricals, Ilaro Court could go up in flames and this is what this supplementary is about today. It is not in any respect, Sir, to improve the comfort level of the Prime Minister in the residential part of the property. I am insisting on that point, Sir.

The Attorney-General said that this matter was dealt with in my absence because Members in my Cabinet know how very particular I am about even the appearance of extravagance at Ilaro Court.

I am hearing the charge by the Opposition that it is being used for commercial purposes will now be the latest rumour in the society.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I think the public knows where I stand in relation to matters like these, Sir. If the Opposition wants to believe that I am going to have a commercial kitchen to start a chef service at Ilaro Court - it sounds wonderful. I could use it as I have certain talents as a chef but I give the Opposition the assurance that I will not be using it for purposes of employing my skills as a chef to earn an additional income. If that is what is bothering the Opposition, you can rule that out. This is just to make sure, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, on a point of order. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter knows quite well that we were not implying that he will be using the kitchen for his personal use. When we speak of commercial use, he knows quite well what we are talking about.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I can only say that it is not for commercial use either. I am stressing the point that it is a kitchen of commercial scale. It is of commercial scale because sometimes it has to accommodate 5,000 people. There is a difference between being of a commercial scale and being of commercial use. The facilities at Ilaro Court are not put to the use of any commerce. There is a standing policy being observed that

national organizations serving a non profit purpose can, from time to time have access to the use of the facilities for non profit charitable purposes. They will have large numbers and they will need to have access to the facilities of this large scale, hence the request for the expenditure.

The Democratic Labour Party will not need to because they do not have any more large numbers, Sir. The Barbados Labour Party does not ever use Ilaro Court for any of its partisan functions - never have, never will. The Barbados Labour Party's dinners are held wherever, but never at Ilaro Court.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Attorney-General may want to speak on this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I would not have entered this debate were it not for the fact that the Prime Minister, having said that the people understand his philosophy on these issues, has spent more time trying to explain what is a non issue than was necessary. In the process of that he accused my colleague of cheap shots and on seeking to make this into a political issue.

Mr. Chairman, having spoken on the issue, all the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, who spoke in my presence had been trying to do, was to elicit some clarity on this issue. That is all.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I heard what he said. He is entitled to say that too and you cannot stop him from saying it. As long as he is within the rules of this House he is entitled to say it and if the public knows your position you would not have to be jumping up and down every ten minutes trying to explain how it is that a kitchen at Ilaro Court, just the equipment alone costs \$70 000 according to this. This is more than what it would cost a man to set up a small catering business in Barbados.

As an Opposition, the pretense in here that - if I were here, I might-not have approved it - so the Attorney-General must explain it or the Minister of Public Works and Transportation must explain it or somebody else it. A man must accept responsibility for his actions. If you do not agree with it, withdraw it. I will sit down and let us stop wasting time.

The problem in here is that there are people in this Chamber who spent their entire political career trying to project one image to the public, while at the same time

doing other things which go contrary to that image. That is not necessary. That is not the kind of politics you have to practice.

If you get up like a man in this Chamber and say that Ilaro Court needs this and explain properly why it needs it, there would be no need for you to be jumping up and down explaining constantly that it is not you who need it, or it is somebody else who is bringing it, or if I were there or I am the most frugal person on God's earth. That is part of the problem with this Government.

All you need to do is to be frank and stop pirouetting and posing to the public. This is \$70 000 in expenditure. According to Members on that Side, money like this cannot be spent unless it comes in here and when it comes in here it is our duty to question it and none of you over there can stop us. You can call it cheap political shots or you can call it a political issue. I make the point that I know people in St. John who cannot get \$70 000 from the National Housing Corporation (NHC) to borrow to buy an entire 2-bedroom house when from the outset they were told that they can get it from the NHC. I have to ask why the Government could have the temerity to come in here today with housing unallocated, built, completed, unallocated, people being given deposits by the NHC, now they cannot complete and pay commitment fees and all kinds of problems and you are 'pompassetting' over the explaining of \$70 000.

We want to get some explanations on the substance, but for the time being, we have to take the Government on the basis of the priorities the Government outlines. Anytime the House of Assembly has to deal with one supplementary for \$70 000 and spend all of this time on it, it must tell you that it is Government's priority because you set this agenda. This is not Private Member's Business. 4.35 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let us put some facts in the record first. The appliances to be purchased are as follows:

- 1 Convection oven
- 1 Dishwasher
- 1 Microwave oven
- 2 Drop-in sinks
- 1 Gas range
- 1 Refrigerator; and
- 1 Freezer.

For a total of \$55 073.30 plus VAT of \$8 260.99, and freight which equals \$70 000.

Quotations for those appliances were sought for less than \$100 000 and it was entirely proper to seek quotations from two companies, these being T. Geddes Grant Ltd. and Designers Choice.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Ministry of Public Works and Transport received the quotations and they recommended Designers Choice. Those are the essential facts relating to this. I would like to say, however, that the context of the equipment - and it is regrettable that we had this debate too in the way that it has gone - but some facts have to be told. In Trinidad and Tobago the then Prime Minister, Patrick Manning redesigned the kitchen at the House in Trinidad opposite the Hilton Hotel for \$1 million.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: One of the first things that this Government was confronted with as an administration early in 1995 at the second Planning and Priorities Meeting was a presentation by the then Health Planner to build a kitchen at the Geriatric Hospital in Beckles Road for \$4 million. That had been done when the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) formed the Government of this country and developed a project for a kitchen there. We had to kick that from here as far as you can kick it out.

The Opposition come in here carping about \$70 000 and I am giving them what it is to be used for. It is to fix the kitchen at Ilaro Court that is going to be done by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. The appliances are to be supplied by Designers Choice. Those are the facts.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I did not think that I would have been brought into this debate. I thought that a simple matter of asking for \$70 000 to refurbish the kitchen at Ilaro court would have been a matter that the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister would have come and made the resolution and we would have said, we second it, and that the Opposition would not have tried to get political points out of it.

I am the Minister for Public Works and Transport. This Ministry is responsible for the upkeep, refurbishment and general maintenance of all government buildings. The building, Ilaro Court which is the residence of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister is in a position where the roof is leaking badly. The electricity in the building has gone haywire. The Government Electrical Department said that it *has* become a fire hazard and that the building will have to be rewired at sometime. The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister told us that we can get the residence to refurbish it and he will go to his private residence at West Terrace. The kitchen was stripped by the workers of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. The equipment was all rusted. The walls were all tattered and needed painting. It was found that we needed that equipment and that was the cost of the equipment. I do not see why our Prime Minister should be living in those conditions. The

grounds there are in splendid condition. The Prime Minister has his own personal residence and I am quite sure that he has paid his mortgage for it. We are holding Ilaro Court in trust for the people of Barbados and we have to make sure that the building is well maintained.

I have heard people in here talking about permits. I do not know how permits get into this debate at all.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: The Honourable Member for St. John will say those things. The Honourable Member for St. John talked about houses and \$70 0000 being spent on a kitchen but that is the residence of a Prime Minister. It should be well maintained by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

The Honourable Member for St. John sees himself as a corporate lawyer. He was in an office in Bay Street with plush carpet and when you walked in there you were likely to break your ankle. When he got put out the other day, he came out with just a filing cabinet and two chairs. That should not happen.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport is responsible for the maintenance of all government buildings and I fully support the spending of this money on a proper residence for the use of the Prime Minister of Barbados.

I thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, when this Bill was first introduced, I requested that the Attorney-General should deal with this Bill. It is regrettable, Sir, that this Bill has now been removed from Ilaro Court to permits. I have been accused, because one speaker said, "the Members over here." I have never accused anybody of anything although I am the Shadow Minister of Public Works and Transport. I have not said anything about permits.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I have not gone on the Internet to check it.

Asides.

4.45 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am asking the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central to withdraw his remarks in which he accused me of accusing him of issuing permits. I have never done that. I think it is unfair to me. It is true that I am Shadow Minister of Housing, Public Works and all of that and I must deal with

it, but I have not dealt with it. I am not accepting this charge as yet for the simple reason that I could not have made a charge against the Minister for Public Works when I knew full well the policy of the Prime Minister who said in this Parliament that he would not allow certain things to get into the hands of people to create quota systems and to create confusion on the road.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: At this point, I would like the debate to return to the Resolution. I heard the asides. Let us get on to business. The Resolution is about money, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Prime Minister's house is the property of the country of Barbados and I am a bit concerned that we can have a foundation begging for donations on behalf of the Prime Minister's house. I would ask the Prime Minister to speak to those people who are responsible for the Foundation getting donations in the name of the Government of Barbados for the Prime Minister's house. It is a serious precedent that is being set and I am begging the Prime Minister - I know where he stands on this.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You know how Barbadians operate and people will get the impression that various gifts are going to the Prime Minister when in truth and in fact they are not going to the Prime Minister but because they are being...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying that those people who are giving donations must understand that they are going to the Foundation and not to the Prime Minister or Government of Barbados. When they give the donations it must be made clear that these donations are for the Foundation and they are not misled that these are for the Government or anybody. I rest my case there.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I am really pleased that this debate has taken this approach. Throughout this term we can anticipate a desperate Opposition led by the member for St. John who will go down in Caribbean history as perhaps the most failed political leader. He will occupy a position similar to that of people like Vincent Beache and Julian Hunte leading his party time after time to disastrous defeat. A level of desperation is setting in in the politics where the kind of delicious nastiness that is masqueraded as serious parliamentary debate will become more and more a feature of the Democratic Labour Party politics.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I think for the integrity of the this Chamber I have to rise on a point of order. I do not think you would allow "delicious nastiness which passes for debate". That reflects on you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would ask the Member for St. Peter to use synonyms.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The extremely delicious nastiness of DLP politics will become more and more a feature of Barbadian politics like the invention of a farce that the Government gave \$240 million to the sugar industry. We can expect more and more of this. In this particular matter the issue has been provoked by the Member for St. Lucy that there is a commercial kitchen at Ilaro Court, obviously, the implication is that it is being used for commercial purposes.

Sir, the point that the money should have been spent on building houses for poor people is how it will be put on the road. The Member for St. Michael West Central has put in the record that the kitchen equipment at Ilaro Court owned by the people has rusted out. It has to be replaced. It will cost \$55 000 net plus tax. The kitchen equipment which is used for official functions at Ilaro Court has rusted out and has to be replaced. The estimates of the Ministry of Public Works is that it will cost \$55 000 plus tax and that is what is before the House.

We are hearing that the Government is wrong for taking private donations for Ilaro Court because it should come here for the money. If it comes here for the money then you hear that the money should be used to build poor people houses. As I say, the delicious nastiness of the DLP politics, they say one thing out of the corner of their mouths.

Ilaro Court is public property so you come here for it and if you come here for a perfectly legitimate purpose... But we hear about how it is going to be used as a commercial kitchen. Rather than using the money to fix a kitchen that had been pulled down that it should be used to build two houses for poor people.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I hope the Right Honourable Prime Minister can help this House as to how much it cost to build the study for Mr. Branford Taitt? What was the value of the gate?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am not going to get into that, Sir. What I can assure the House is that while I have access to the official residence, I am not going to let it be used in a manner other than to the credit of the country. All of the national organisations that have found they can identify with Ilaro Court to support their causes to raise funds for charitable purposes, should feel confident that they can continue to do so using this money that is being used for that purpose.

I am also never going to draw the housing allowance that other Prime Ministers have drawn while living at Ilaro Court. I want to repeat the point that Prime Ministers can also draw housing allowance while living at Ilaro Court and some of recent vintage have drawn it while living there.

Many people had reasons why they could not live there while drawing a housing allowance and having access to it. I pledge the House, Sir, that I will never draw the housing allowance while I am living there but some have drawn it and it is still on the books.

The Member for St. John "pompasetts" about the use of public property for private purposes. The member for St. Michael West was correct in saying he got thrown out of an office. He says he is spending his full time on Opposition business but we know otherwise. We know that he is attached to a major firm and he is continuing to do his legal work. I am going to ask him as a minister of the public accounts if he is going to account for the use of public property for his own commercial purposes. That is what he should tell us about.

His law work is now being done on public property. I want to know if they have an accounting for that. I want to know if he is using the telephone and the fax to do his law work at the public's expense, if those things are going to be shown and if every month he is going to reimburse the public treasury. He is masquerading as giving up everything to concentrate on the Opposition but he is continuing to do his private work. He is still doing his private work and the public is given the impression of this great sacrifice.

I am watching it carefully, Sir. I want to see the reimbursements for the use of public property to do commercial private work. Ilaro Court has never been used for commercial purposes but the Leader of the Opposition's office downstairs, the maintenance of which upkeep comes from the public treasury is being used for private purposes. How much is the fax? What about the overseas calls and electricity?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Right Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. The Right Honourable Member is imputing quite improper motives to me. I have a telephone, fax machine, computer and everything home at me. I do no private work out of the Leader of the Opposition's office.

I am going to speak again in this particular debate so it does not bother me. 4.55 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, that matter is before the court and I want my lawyers to proceed with it as a matter of urgency.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would ask the Honourable Member for St. Peter to proceed and stop talking across the floor to the Honourable Member for St. John.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, if you cannot hear him, I can hear him very clearly and I have to respond to the nastiness that he puts in the records, Mr. Chairman, that apparently is silent to your ears.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am going to ask the Honourable Member for St. John to desist from talking across the floor while the Honourable Member for St. Peter is speaking.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, if there is a masquerade, he knows about masquerading. The Barbadian public has to be told that the Leader of the Opposition has not given up private practice as a lawyer. The masquerade is that he is involved in this great sacrifice having lead his Party twice to an ignominious defeat and that he, now after two massive defeats, is now learning the virtue of public sacrifice. That a new image is created, Sir, having made a large fortune while leading men to a disgraceful defeat - he drowned 26 of them - now comes back to society with sanctimony saying that he is now going to give up all his private practice. We are watching it because I know about the masquerade because he is the master of the masquerade.

Sir, we are now being told that he is coining to the office only twice a week. The public has the view that the Leader of the Opposition is in his office morning, noon and night working hard in the public interest. Now we hear that he comes only twice a week and that he is home on his fax doing his private work.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, let those facts be told. That the Leader of the Opposition is not down here doing the public business. That this business about giving up the private, Sir, is a joke.

Sir, as I have said, I anticipate that in this term nothing that this Government does will be free of salacious comments by a desperate Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition has had two solid defeats in his chest. The third solid defeat is going to come, Sir. I can give him that assurance. He will get more and more desperate because he knows what his men are saying and what they plan to do. He has only survived the second defeat merely because the numbers on the Other Side were so scattered that the Party was not prepared to contemplate the folly from St. Lucy being a leader of the Democratic Labour Party. That is the only way in which he has managed to survive.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The folly is not from St. Lucy, it is from St. Peter when he became Prime Minister in 1994 when he did not expect it.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the politics of desperation is going to become deeper and deeper, swelling up from the bosom of the Democratic Labour Party because the Honourable Member for St. John knows that he already sits with men who want to flee from him. He will do anything now to grasp and clutch at power.

Sir, I want to stress that this is not something that we are adding; we are not adding new equipment at Ilaro Court. The old equipment in the kitchen used for official functions has rusted out; it is dysfunctional and we are replacing it. If we had decided to add, enlarge, embellish or show extravagance then it would be a legitimate issue. Is the Government not to replace public property when it has rusted out? That is the issue this debate raises. The Government says that we have to replace it whether it is with police, Defence Force or schools when it is rusted out - and these are the same people who come here talking about conditions for the police.

Ilaro Court's kitchen facilities have rusted out and we are replacing it. If you were to hear that, Mr. Chairman, that I was going to build a \$4 million kitchen as was intended at the Geriatric Hospital, Sir, that would be another issue. If I am going to add new fancy equipment at the public's expense to the official residence then that would be an issue but it has rusted out. If the Opposition feels that there is an alternative and there is a substitute, that is their view, Sir, but this is a necessity. I was not there but I support and I will continue to support it. It is not intended to serve a private function but a public function. It is public property and I commend this matter to the House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I have always adopted an article of faith in dealing with the Honourable Member for St. Peter and I do not allow any debate to descend to such a level that a lot of ranting and ravings about people's personal lives enter into this debate.

Mr. Chairman, let me make the position abundantly clear. This is a supplementary. I did not ask the Honourable Member for St. Peter's permission to be a Member of Parliament. I fought for and won a seat despite what he describes as his vaunting, personal popularity. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy fought for and won a seat. The Honourable Member for St. Peter can get in here week after week and say what he wants about any of us on this Side, it makes no difference because as long as you apply the rule, we have our voices and can speak, we will come in here and speak. Men of greater leadership stature than the Honourable Member for St. Peter, those who preceded him, would have seen this as a good opportunity to put the facts on the records. Not to launch a personal and vicious tirade against other Members in the Chamber. They would have seen it as an opportunity to explain because you can only be

strengthened by explaining. It will take a weakling to bring something to this Chamber and then give the impression that he did not really want to bring it, that three other people wanted it....

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I would ask that those words be withdrawn.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please re-phrase the word 'weakling'.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I would have to question the appropriateness of a minister who is accountable to this Parliament himself for matters in his ministry, coming to this Chamber, bringing a Resolution and then saying, left up to him it would not be here but still defending it and attacking other people.

Mr. Chairman, that is the complete folly of this particular debate. Mr. Chairman, it has to do with ego. Somebody who believes that the public has a particular perception of him and that anything the Honourable Member for St. Lucy or I say, which in anyway seeks to tarnish that reputation, must be met with personal attacks and the kind of defence that is not necessary.

If the Honourable Member is so happy that he decimated the Opposition in this country... 5.05 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, there are many Government buildings that are fire hazards. How come the priority is Ilaro Court? The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central should check the records of the Electrical Engineering Department. I went to a school at Waterford that was a fire hazard for the entire time I was at school. The School Hall was condemned. We held shows every year. There are private schools in this country which are fire hazards.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member for St. John alluded to the fact that I said the building was a fire hazard. But when we visited the building a few weeks ago, the Government's Electrical Engineer said, "This building is a fire hazard, I would advise that the Prime Minister get out of here and give us this building that we can work on it as soon as possible." The Prime Minister was sleeping in the building, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that that recommendation had been made to people before.

Marine House was not only a fire hazard, it was a health hazard and all kinds of other hazards, and for years the Chief Electrical Engineer told the Government to demolish the building. But there were other priorities. It was only in a sense of ordering those priorities that eventually the Government complied. They were Ministers on that Side who are not in here now, who understood what it is to practice frugality. They recognised that they were walking into a fire hazard every day at Marine House. All this Side is asking and is entitled to ask, just like the Members on that Side have asked before, if this is a priority, then say so.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central said it is a priority. It is a priority over St. Leonard's Boys' Secondary School. It is a priority over St. Margaret's Primary School where a lady fell and died as a result of her injuries and it is a priority over District 'C' Police Station. Sir, and although it falls under the Prime Minister's Ministry, it is not his priority. He allowed somebody who was acting to set his priority and all the Prime Minister is doing is just being here and being 'Mr. Nice Guy' and attacking the Opposition when the Opposition is doing its job.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is not going to stop us on this Side. If for example somebody were to tell me that some figurines purchased by a government department to hand out for our national celebration cost \$60 000 out of that government department's budget, let us say somebody were to tell me that, and a supplementary came in here subsequently to approve that expenditure, we would have a right to ask. The fact that you have given 60 000 people a figurine each does not make a difference because, is that figurine more important than using that money....

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It may be a very clear analogy, like the NHC analogy. That is what is getting you all so hot, that the NHC analogy is a valid one. It is valid because I said there are people who received deposits and now cannot complete the purchase of houses costing less than \$70 000 and nobody is rushing to solve their problems.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, if we allow the NHC to become an issue in this debate, Sir, we would have to broaden the debate so that the facts of the NHC can also be told. So if you do not want it in the debate, I would ask that those remarks be struck from the record. I ask that the rules of the House be observed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would not order that we stick to the subject matter.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I am asking that those remarks be struck from the record, otherwise we would have to debate the NHC, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You cannot strike them. They are relevant to the debate.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am making a ruling now. I want all of you to stick to the subject matter and I am asking you to withdraw those remarks about the NHC.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I can withdraw them. The truth is the truth, Sir, but I can withdraw them, Sir. Let me go further and say this, that as long I am the Member of Parliament for St. John, and even beyond that, I would still provide a legal aid service at my Constituency Office. I have been doing it for the past twelve years and the Honourable Member for St. Peter has to understand that I have never come into this Chamber to beg for anything. It was not me who came in here and said that I was giving up my career, because I found politics too difficult. But you allowed the Honourable Member to talk about everybody's personal business.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member can take up all of the telephone bills and all the fax bills...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. John is accusing you of allowing a relevant debate to take place. I submit to you, Sir, that it is an affront and offensive to the Chair and I ask that those remarks be struck from the record. I am asking you to rule.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am not allowing them. I would like you to be decent about the whole debate. You are a man of fair character. I would like you to be straight. Just keep to the subject now. Let us keep to the subject matter. I have given you all a little latitude both Sides and as from now I want you to stick to the subject matter.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am sticking to the subject matter that the Honourable Member for St. Peter in accordance with these rules raised. What the Honourable Member said, is that I have been using the office of the Leader of the Opposition to contract private business. I did not know that was relevant to this, but I discovered that when he was speaking it was not struck. So if you wish to retroactively strike these I will sit down. The point I want to make is that the Honourable Member for St. Peter, as Minister of Finance is entitled to go through every expenditure in Government with a fine tooth comb and determine who spends money on what, Mr. Chairman.

I consider it to be the kind of nasty slur which he is trying to throw on Members on this Side.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, on a point of order. I am asking that those remarks be struck from the record.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: 'nasty slur' will be struck from the record. I am asking both of you to sit.

There are times when we give you all a little latitude to expand on your subjects. I believe as from now you must stick to the subject matter or else I would stop you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John wants the word 'slur' to remain in the record of the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have asked that that be struck from the record - 'nasty slur'. That is not parliamentary language.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, all that he said was not parliamentary. I am not going to tussle with you or anybody else in this debate.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please uphold the high standards of this Chamber.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I said that it is an affront to the dignity of the Chair for the Honourable Member for St. John to be speaking that he is not going to be tussling with you. He either will accept the discipline of the Chair or he will not. But, no Member of this House is to treat the Chair with that lack of respect that he is treating and I am asking you to rule on the matter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I realise at this point, everybody is getting very hot in the head and I would like just to return to a little normality. I am quite sure, the Honourable Member for St. John has got a sense of pride and certainly will uphold the high dignity of this Chamber, Please carry on in a very descent manner.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, let me make the point very clearly. I have a great sense of pride and that is why when the Honourable Member of St. Peter was speaking, I assumed that there would have been some intervention to restore the standards to this Chamber.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do not want you to retract any further. As from here, I just want you to go straight, you say you are about to finish and please let us keep this debate at a very high standard. You have about three minutes more. 5.15p.m.

Let me make this point here, Mr. Chairman, that what you have is a scenario. Let me recap it for you. A kitchen at the Prime Minister's residence costing \$70 334.29 can be a priority in relation to government's expenditure in 1999, at a time when the Honourable Member for St. Peter has called on the rest of the society to exercise restraint in their spending and at a time when there are other sections of this community, who basically are looking ...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, in March, the Honourable Member for St. John sat in here and he voted without any complaints for the \$143 000 to do the wiring at Ilaro Court. At that time he did not accuse us of having misplaced priorities. It now becomes a problem when you start to do the wiring in pursuance of spending the \$143 000. At that time, it was stated that the kitchen had to be fixed at the same time and now it is a matter for criticism.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in March they told us that this economy was soaring so high that brand new Mercedes Benz, Volvos, BMW's and expenditures of an enormous nature on all kinds of things, together with commitments in relation to some statutory corporations essentially off budget, in other words, not necessarily reflected in those Estimates, demonstrated that the country was in an orgy of expenditure.

Leading up to the election, the Honourable Member for St. Peter told the people of Barbados that he was leading this country to the greatest level of prosperity ever in its history. Now, Sir, a month ago, they told the country that the economic situation is not as rosy and that it would have been irresponsible of the Minister of Finance to see a situation developing and not try to ensure that people understood the gravity of that situation. All the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and I are saying is, in the context of expenditure priorities such as primary schools with environmental problems and a whole range of other things, can kitchen equipment costing \$70 344.29 represent the priority of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP)? If the answer to that is yes, then the Government has to accept that that is the message that they are sending in this particular debate.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the fact that Ilaro Court is called the Official residence is because official activities of the State take place there and it exists for that purpose. There is capacity at Ilaro Court to house facilities to carry out those official functions. Sir, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport has dismantled the kitchen that services official functions because the equipment rusted out and was dysfunctional. There is not now at Ilaro Court any capacity to provide for the functions that the official residence is intended to carry out. If the residence is to continue to service as an official residence that capacity has

to be replaced. We are not asking to add to the capacity. We are asking to replace the capacity that has been dismantled because it rusted out and became dysfunctional. That is what this debate is about.

The Opposition is telling me that in essence, the official residence should not be used for official purposes because this is what this comes down to. In any other country in the world, if an Opposition was to acknowledge that an official residence was condemned as a fire hazard and say that nothing should be done with it, that Opposition would be treated with the public scorn that it deserves for wanting the government to be involved in irresponsible action. Sir, it is not about fixing my house. It is the property of the Government of Barbados that is in the public's eye, which has been condemned by the Government Electrical Department as a fire hazard. The Opposition of the country says that it is not a serious matter and it cannot be a priority.

I am saying to the House, that this is the only Opposition in the history of Barbados which could be told that the official residence of the Head of State of the country is a fire hazard and they say that is not a priority. That is the folly of the politics that would now cause us to understand why the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) is where it is, and why day after day, so many others are seeking to flee.

Sir, the core of the Opposition's argument is simply this. That the Government should not replace the kitchen equipment at Ilaro Court that has rusted out and become dysfunctional thus leaving us in a situation where the embarrassment of not being able to carry out official functions becomes starked. If the Opposition has a vested interest in the Government facing embarrassment for not being able to carry out official functions, Sir, I understand that. However, the Government has a responsibility to continue to govern sensibly and part of government is the sponsorship of official functions.

It did not start with this Prime Minister, Sir. From the time there has been government, the holding of official functions has always been an integral part of government. However, this government now is to be treated as unique that if we have an official function it now becomes an extravagance. That is the deep deep folly that has issued forth from the mouths of the Leader of the Opposition and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in this instance. We are not adding anything to it at all. We are just replacing the rusted out equipment and it becomes a political extravagance.

Sir, I do not know what the Leader of the Opposition thinks of me personally, but I would not wish on any Member of the House that they should have to occupy a residence that has been condemned by the Government

Electrical Department as a fire hazard. I think the public of Barbados - and it is nothing about ego now - would feel that if an official residence of a Prime Minister has been condemned as a fire hazard that something should be done about it, instead it becomes something to be compared with what is to be done with a school. It is a sin.

If the electricals have been done last year and we say that we wanted to put in new 'fancy dangle' hi-tech electricals that will be a different issue but it has been condemned as a basic fire hazard. What do you do? Do you not replace it? How do questions of values arise when you are dealing with a necessity? This is a simple necessity for the simple reason that if you were to go to Ilaro Court now, you will see that there is no facility in place to carry out official functions.

Ilaro Court exists to enable the Government of Barbados to carry out official functions. We will be irresponsible if we were not to continue to carry out those functions which are expected of the State. I will not agree that the government property at Ilaro Court should continue to be a fire hazard because that would be irresponsible and foolish. I do not think that any sensible person could feel that there would be a distortion of priorities if a fire hazard, at an official residence, is put in a proper condition. I want this to become a political debate, Mr. Chairman, that you are replacing the electricals of an official residence that can be burned down. The Fire Service has been called in on more than one occasion because the alarm went off. The Opposition condemns this as an extravagance and you now have to wonder why this Opposition is lost and continues to be lost. You have requisitioned for a kitchen that has rusted and they regard this as sensible Opposition politics? 5.25 p.m.

A former Member for St. Philip South made reference to a comment made by the Honourable Member for St. John recently that says it well that what he said did not add up, that it was the sum total of human knowledge in Barbados. He dismissed him, Sir. Even his former Deputy now is dismissing him as a - I cannot say charlatan because that would be unparliamentary - but he is dismissing him and disregarding him.

I am sure that when Freundel Stuart, Johnny Tudor, Tyrone Estwick and all of them hear the political folly on which the Leader of the Opposition has taken us in this debate they could better understand now why they are where they are; leaderless. It is totally lacking, Sir.

When I begin to put at the Official Residence, extravagant facilities merely to please an ego; when I expand it to put in air conditioned dog kennels or whatever; when I

put in a multimillion dollar facility, lambaste me but if I fix the wiring for a building that has been condemned as a fire trap, and if I replace rusty dysfunctional kitchen facilities used for gatherings of thousands, if I do those things, I plead to the House that I am responding only to matters of urgent, public importance and priority. I am protecting the public's property.

In all this, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

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

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Government's Business for the day. I am going to move the adjournment of this House until Wednesday, not Tuesday but Wednesday, December 1, 1999 at 11.00 o'clock. On that occasion we will be dealing with the Resolutions and Orders in respect of the wages arrangement with the National Union of Public Workers, the productivity bonus and the first instalment of the 8 per cent pay back.

I will be grateful if members at the Clerks' Table will also make arrangements for the Senate to sit on Friday, December 3, 1999. As we are going now, Sir, unless there is anything urgent, or of an emergency nature, we will have a further sitting on December 14, 1999. That will more than likely be the last sitting for this calendar year.

I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Wednesday, December 1, 1999 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 5.35 p.m.

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