
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 6, 2001

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, March 6, 2001.

PRESENT

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., B.C.H., 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. Miss B. A. MILLER, B.C.H. (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE

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

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B.

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

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS

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

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, 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 Rev. Father Mark Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, February 27, 2001.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, February 27, 2001, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

PAPERS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have before me the Accounts and Statements for September, 2000 as prepared by the Accountant General.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of pupils from the Co-operative High School and Business College as well as students from the Foundation School.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay:

1. The Chairman's Report of the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Limited for the Year ended June 30, 2000.
2. Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Limited (Parent Company only) for the Year ended June 30, 2000.
3. Reports of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarters ended September 30, 2000 and December 31, 2000 respectively.
4. The Annual Report of the National Productivity Council for the Fiscal Year ended September 30, 1999.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Agricultural Development Fund Bill, 2001 be read a first time.

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

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

MOTIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is appropriate under this item of the Order Paper to make an excuse for the Right Honourable Prime Minister. He has asked me to advise the House that he cannot be here this morning. There is a meeting of the Caribbean Development Bank Board of Directors to appoint, I believe, a new Governor besides other business. This afternoon, at three o'clock, there is also some matter involving the World Bank which is of critical interest to Barbados, and the Prime Minister is expected to be at that event also. He has asked to be excused from today's Sitting of the House.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am to advise, Sir, that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 23 asked by the Honourable Member for St. John is ready. I am also to advise that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 32 asked by the Honourable Member for St. John is also ready.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – SECOND READING OF THE EMPLOYMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL, 2000

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me begin this debate by saying that I am aware that there has been some confusion by the public, especially the employers, as to the nature of this particular amendment. This has nothing to do with the Employment Protection Bill. Some of them did call to find out whether or not this would be the debate today and I must inform you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I expect very shortly, in fact, I believe the next time that I speak on labour legislation in this Honourable Assembly would be to introduce to this House the Employment Protection Bill.

This is a very small amendment to our present Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, Cap. 346. The amendment arises because Barbados has ratified the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment Convention. It is ILO Convention No. 138 and what that Convention does is to say that a young person is someone 16 years old and below and that such a person should wherever possible be not called upon to do hard and back-breaking work. It is that kind of convention which we have signed.

What actually happens in our law is this. As in many statutes in respective jurisdictions of the Caribbean there is always a definition as to what a child is and what a young person is. We have had in this particular piece of legislation the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, which presently says that a child is a person under the age of 15. Remember that I said earlier that having signed the Minimum Age Convention that cuts it off at 16.

This amendment is really to bring us in line with the overarching ILO Convention. When we sent that Convention to the Solicitor General for comments the Solicitor General advised that our Act should be amended to define young persons as persons not less than 16 years in order to be consonant with the ILO Convention.

I hope that the reason for the amendment is made very clear to the House. Obviously, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am

happy that we do have here this morning some young school children because the ILO has been insisting over the past decade that member states should do everything possible to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. They believe that this Minimum Age Convention will be another step which member states could take to ensure the complete elimination of child labour.

The ILO has said that there should be a minimum age under which children should not be called upon to work. They consider that at this particular age, and they cut it off at 16, that work is inappropriate for children. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ILO has gone on to insist that national action be taken to ensure that every member state has in place legislation to ensure that there is a minimum age for the admission to employment.

11.30 a.m.

This legislation would be one of the fundamental instruments used to assist in bringing about the total abolition of child labour. The actual words of the International Labour Organisation are:

“Members should, insofar as it is compatible with national law cooperate with international efforts aimed at the prohibition and immediate elimination of the worse form of child labour.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I have said, this amendment is being made by Barbados in an effort to cooperate with the ILO recommendation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, protecting our children is one of the ways opened to Government to show the world that we, as a country, have a conscience and that we have some idea of social justice.

Sir, I do believe that when Barbados passed its Education Act, which made education compulsory up to age sixteen, that in a way, Barbados was impliedly repealing that law already and what we were saying was that children have to go to school up to age sixteen. Put another way, this definition of sixteen years now brings this particular Act in line with our Education Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that minimum age legislation underscores the importance of basic primary education and that forcing a child to work at an early age can never be a fitting substitute for a normal childhood experience.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are children in some countries who never see the door of a school. There are children in some African states, Asian countries and Latin America who never go to school. In this regard Barbados has to be praised. We have to praise the Caribbean region for having compulsory education legislation on their statute books.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know of the effort which Barbados makes in ensuring that all of our children attend school. I know of the job of truant officers. I know of Mr. Barrett, the senior attendance officer and the work he does. I know of the amount of cursing he gets when he tries to round up children from the bus stand who do not want to attend school.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Yes, he personally goes to the bus stand. He acts outside the school as the ears and eyes of the school teacher and he does a very good job. I believe that Barbados could do with a few more truant officers. Very often he has to go to court with these children when they give problems. When they do not attend school, he goes around to the school, checks the attendance register. I have to commend those truant officers for the work they do.

On Sunday I was reading an article written by Mr. John Blackman, former principal of Deighton Griffith School. To show how important he thinks the truant officers are, he made the point that when a school child is caught in the bus stand not going to school, that they should be taken to the police station and that the parent should have to pay to get the child back.

Obviously, some people might disagree with him but what he was saying is that attendance at school is considered to be so important that parents should take some of the blame when children do not go to school.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we believe that one child kept away from school, for whatever reason, is one too many. Sir, for this reason we believe that the age of admission to employment should be no less than the age of completion of compulsory education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to make the point that this legislation or indeed any kind of legislation does not prevent a child from working in the vacation but the work which the child does in the vacation must also be appropriate. Children should not be used as beast of burden in the vacation or at all. There is some leeway for children to do work in the vacation which is appropriate but work is totally forbidden during the school time.

In other words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not every kind of activity by children should be forbidden by national legislation. A vacation job, as I have said, is okay and children often enjoy this anyhow because they can earn money for themselves while working during their holidays

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this amendment is aimed at prohibiting the imposition on children of labour which calls for greater physical and mental resources than children would normally possess at that age. It is aimed at preventing

work which interferes with their educational development. The key thing is that work must not interfere with the schooling of the children. Just as there is a minimum age for consent and voting, there is a minimum age for the admission to employment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I have said, it is sad to have to relate that in certain Eastern and African countries, indeed, as close to us as Latin America young children work as prostitutes, they work as objects of pornography and in the trafficking of drugs and in other activities which jeopardise the morals of the children.

I recall the very first trip that I made to Geneva to an ILO convention. I will never forget the way in which some of the representatives of the countries got up and defended child labour.

11.40 a.m.

The arguments that they put forward and the way they were putting forward these arguments and the passion with which they were putting forward the arguments virtually turned me off. The way in which they were saying that they have to keep child labour and that there is no substitute for child labour. They said that if you remove child labour from us now our economy is going to drop through, what do you expect us to do. I will never forget the way I heard them defending six and seven-year-old children being at work.

Recent statistics show that around the world today there is approximately one hundred and twenty million children under the age of 16 who are working on a daily basis. Such figures must make child labour a very alarming problem in the world today. A lot of them are working in the face of national and international requirements. In other words, some of these countries have actually signed some of these conventions. Even though they signed them, they still have a situation where children are working. They say in one breath that it should not happen and in their countries it continues to happen. The protection of children from this type of work is one of the basic principles of the ILO. They always preach this gospel which says that there should be no child labour and we should do what we can to eliminate child labour.

Children working in factories is a very big thing. It is to be abhorred and not to be excused. Some of them work at very dangerous heights; some of them work underground and some of them work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools. Such work invariably, Mr. Deputy Speaker, leaves them with injuries which they have to carry for their entire lives, injuries such as a bad back, one hand and so on. There are some very graphic pictures on the walls of the ILO's office in Geneva which show hundreds of young children who have lost their hands and feet due to working with machinery.

I recalled a businessman from Barbados who went to Brazil. He was looking down onto the streets one night and he saw some one-hand children. When he went down to speak to them, he discovered how they lost their hands and feet. He said that he was drinking a gin and tonic and after speaking to them he could not finish his drink.

We are fortunate in Barbados. If we really know of the plight of some of these children from around the world, I am sure that a lot of us would take a closer look at the things we do here.

In some countries it is not unusual for children to be in full-time employment at the age of six. In many ways, therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, child labour damages the health and safety of the world's children and exposes them to physical abuse. A lot of them have to lift heavy loads and incur back injuries for a lifetime. They are given tasks which are monumental for their physical make up. Some of them work underground in mines for eight hours at a time without seeing light. This is their daily routine. They do not see light when they go down into the mines and they do not get proper ventilation. They have to inhale hazardous substances and are exposed to noise levels which inflict damage to their ears. Child labour robs them of their health, childhood and their lives.

What seems to satisfy the employers very often, is the fact that they are exploited as cheap labour and secondly they take the place of the older workers and that keeps down their wage bill.

This is one of the arguments that I heard from a representative from Pakistan. He worked with the Persian carpets. He argued that the little fingers can do the job better than the fingers of the adults. Therefore, you had to keep them there to do that job for them and nobody else can do it. When you really hear the arguments, it stuns you as someone coming from the Caribbean for the first time.

The point is, Barbados opposes any form of child labour, direct or indirect, open or subtle. Our position is that children should be in school and that they should live their lives as children and not be subjected to that back-breaking work. None of them should have the responsibility of a mother being thrown on them in their tender years. I will explain what I mean by that in a minute.

This is an area where Barbadians have to be very careful. In Barbados we have to guard against what can be referred to as hidden work situations. The lack of money we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, can drive parents into making children hit the streets to sell dunks, ackees, newspapers and push handcarts to get money to help with the household expenses. I have to say, thankfully, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is not really widespread in Barbados. There is some of it but it is not widespread.

My concern is for the larger percentage of children that have to do unpaid work around the house. I am not referring to the things that all of us, perhaps, at some time had to do. I am not thinking about grazing the cow; picking meat for the rabbit; bringing in the stocks in the evening or sweeping the yard. Those are not the things that I am speaking about.

There are some children, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the age of 12, I know about three situations and I spoke to the Director of the Child Care Board before I came here, and she confirmed that they have complaints about the same thing. Children at the age of 12 who have to cook for their smaller brothers and sisters; who literally have to parent their young relatives; who have to do adult chores and who are not allowed to live lives as children.

There are mothers in Barbados who work at night and they rest in the day. While they are resting in the day, they have their children doing all of the work that they would normally have to do in the day.
11.50 a.m.

There are children who do not go to school because of this because the mother is not able to function and so the child has to stay home and function on her behalf. So a debate like this Mr. Deputy Speaker, can be useful and we must occasionally give public consciousness a knee-jerk about these things. Compulsory attendance at school, Mr. Deputy Speaker may not be enough by itself, we have to monitor what goes on in some of our Barbadian homes.

In spite of this relatively grim picture which has been painted about child labour there is still reasons for optimism, there is still some hope. The International Labour Organization (ILO) pressure has been unrelentless and the world has witnessed a change in attitude by countries who once sought to cover up the existence of child labour. Such countries, Sir, now admit that there is need to do something about the problem.

Pakistan, for example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has signed an agreement never to send children under the age of 14 working in their multimillion dollar carpet industry and this is a change from what used to go on because that is an industry that was built on the fingers of children 5, 6 and 7 years old and now they have said that they are not going to be having children under 14 working in that industry at all, so, there is some hope. Like the International Labour Organization (ILO), many of the countries admit that child labour is not a problem which can be solved overnight and so some countries – nearly all of the member states – have to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Some of the things that would be classified as the worst forms of child labour that together all of the countries that said they want to put an end to, would be the offering or procuring of children for prostitution or pornography, procuring of children for illegal drugs and involvement of children in work which would jeopardise their safety and their health.

To wind up Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said at the beginning, a lot of these countries have vowed to strengthen their national capabilities and to address this problem of child labour. One of the ways of doing this is by ratifying this particular Minimum Age Convention. Barbados has done this and as a result of this action, we have had to make this slight amendment to our Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act. I thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to make an observation up front. I am happy to see that the whole Cabinet sitting have congratulated the Member for this speech and the lone Member on the backbench did not and I admire the lone Member on the backbench for not doing it because when one listens to the Minister, one gets the impression that we are in an age where we have rampant child labour in Barbados and that we, while ratifying this Bill by making the necessary amendments that we might be doing something in the interest of the country. I want to warn this Parliament that even though it sounds good up front that we have to be very careful how we accept foolishness from international organizations.

Let me say this, we are in a stage in our development in Barbados where we are complaining that our young people are involved in all sorts of foolishness and instead of us looking at ways where we can remove them from that particular direction and try to encourage them to get involved in productive things, I am now hearing that this is a sin. Let me say from the outset that I do not support child labour as described by other organizations but I cannot see that here in Barbados that we do not have a need for this type of amendment, that people under the age of 16 cannot be described as being involved in child labour as in the same context as is being described elsewhere. I want to warn this Parliament that sometimes we come here and pass a lot of foolishness and then you will get bodies being formed to tell people under the age of 16 that they cannot work because they regard that as child labour and we have got to be very, very, very careful. The Minister said that if you have a vacation job that is not counted. It means that if you are working on weekends that might be counted. It also means, as he said, that if you are selling newspapers, ackees, *et cetera*, that might be regarded as that also.

I want to warn this Parliament that when we consider what is happening and the tendencies of the wicked minds to attract young persons to do other things to get money that I will prefer to be accused of providing a forum for people to have child labour if, that is what it is called while the young person is selling newspapers and developing a sound mind and a mind to be a self-employed person, for the simple reason, we have to be very, very careful that we in Barbados

recognize that what is being advocated now can destroy the concept of future employment for people and let me explain that.

If you develop a culture from early it is difficult to break from that culture but if you have to wait until you are 16 or 18, then to go to the job market then there is a tendency that you want a particular type of work to do. If you start early, then it is clear in your mind where you want to progress and I want to warn this House to be very, very, careful in what they are accepting from international organizations.

One would have thought concerning what I started on this Side and now what is being progressed by the Other Side in relationship to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Countries (OECD) that the last government that would bring an amendment to this country would be a Barbados Labour Party Government in light of how international organizations operate but then again, there might be another scenario. There are some clever minds who believe that if people can encourage other people to work that they might be depriving senior people from getting a job and here comes the unemployment statistics.

I am saying this amendment not only deals with unemployment statistics, we have to weigh against the ability of developing young minds with a culture to work. In my opinion I would prefer to err on the side of encouraging people to work at a younger age and develop those work habits. So, even though it sounds good on paper this is not a simple matter.

I would ask the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to rethink this particular one because he cannot tell anybody that this particular matter relates to Barbados. I can assure you that once this amendment is passed in this Parliament there are going to be people in Barbados using this amendment to make sure that certain young people do not get work to help develop their families and their minds, and you have to be very, very careful.

There is a group called Amnesty International, then there will be all types of groups being formed. I will ask the Honourable Minister...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You can get up on a point of order...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...to enlighten me? It is not a matter of enlightening me, you led it.

I am warning you and I will continue to warn you. I know a lot of people are going to say that we do not have the problem, but the main fact that we are bringing this amendment to please an organization even though it does not relate to us, it means that there is a tendency for another grouping of people to be formed and I know they will use this argument against us, I know.

12.00 noon.

Everybody is going to say that it will not happen but I am going to tell you that when it happens, I do not want you saying that you should have listened. I have been hearing that too often in this particular Parliament when we rush in and sign things just because we are told that international organisations are doing it so we should do it too. It is time that Barbados recognises, even if they have to stand alone on matters like these, that they should.

I will not name some of the organisations that will be pushing for this amendment at this point in time but I will get an opportunity when it is right to point out to Barbadians, the importance of this particular amendment today. For the simple reasons, Sir, we already know that the Phillips curve is working in a negative way and I will leave it as that – just the Phillips curve. I say no more on that particular matter.

Sir, I want to deal with another fine point. We have to recognise that there are different cultures operating now in Barbados. We are not going to be able to convince them that this amendment means something to them. They will tell you, that has always been part of their religious culture. What will happen is that the culture that we know about will be the culture affected by this particular amendment. What we are going to see is that young people who have an opportunity to learn the trade of business from an early age, this particular amendment will be used to stop that process from happening.

I am going to warn this Parliament that the same way, Sir, I alluded to another problem somewhere earlier in this Parliament that this can be seen as another step to deprive the young Barbadian, as I know him, of that opportunity to progress in Barbados. At face value it does not look so but I want to warn this Parliament, Sir, that G-77 countries should always be very careful in what they accept, lock, stock and barrel from international organisations.

We have been burnt once, twice, three times. I am warning you, if you do not heed the advice, you will be burnt again. So I am saying, Sir, that I cannot tell any young person in Barbados, especially in these financial times where the 'haves', have and the 'have nots' need to get, not to combine the resources to elevate themselves. What we are seeing, Sir, there are situations where some kids might be able to do some other work, which will not be seen and they will be compensated, and just because you and I will be seen, people will regard that as work.

Sir, we have to be careful. I hear people talking about selling newspapers, ackees and sugar cakes as if that is a crime, not realising, Sir, that is not a crime. That is a culture that leads on to a bigger culture and allows one to develop oneself and being offered at an early age, an opportunity to go to school and to learn, and also have the ability to employ oneself.

I want it to be seen like that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want it to be as that because you are from a particular culture that you cannot blend the two. Whenever the two are blended together, Sir, you get a better product.

Let us take another situation, Sir. If this amendment is allowed to be passed the way it is, I can see the negative people in society preying on young people to do negative work, who previously would have been involved in decent work. We have to be careful sometimes how we allow ourselves to walk into tracks and I am saying that this particular amendment is a track for a country like Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am serious. You can laugh as much as you like. That is how I see it and that is how I see it because...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...That is because I operate at a different level than a lot of the Cabinet Members...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government Ministers know what they want but the truth is that it is all right to deal with theory but there is a difference when it comes to the practical aspect of things, and that is what is lacking on the frontbench. Sir, that is why they cannot understand the finer point that is being made.

I would honestly have thought that the Honourable Member for St. James North, a true grass-roots politician, I thought he was, would have been able to understand and fully appreciate what I am saying. He showed me a law book as if you can deal with this particular problem with a law book. That is the problem. We want to solve everything in this Parliament by a law book, not realising we need to solve these things as they relate to society and the way we see them within this society.

We cannot throw laws and amendments at this particular problem so you can bring all the amendments you want but a youngster who leaves school on evenings and understands doing something productive, is not a youngster

with an idle mind that can easily be persuaded to do something wrong. I warn you.

I beseech you to rethink this because the Minister cannot tell me that there is any good reason why he is making this amendment. I want the Minister to get up and tell the Parliament of Barbados why the Parliament of Barbados will have to make this amendment and to tell me chapter and verse about the people who are offending ILO 138, that section, in Barbados that is why we are making this Amendment. I am going to challenge the Minister that he cannot produce any facts to convince anybody in Barbados that there is a need for this amendment in Barbados.

I do not want to hear about Brazil. I do not want to hear about Pakistan. I do not want to hear about Russia. I want to hear about Barbados and how this affects Barbados as it stands today. When this amendment is passed, I want to know if it is going to have a positive or a negative impact on Barbadians. As I see it, Sir, it is going to have a negative impact because school children who want to develop a working culture, will now be deprived of that working culture.

He said previously, it had nothing to do with the cow and the sheep. The truth is, nobody wants cows any more because in the constituency, of which I am proud to represent, I had a youngster who gave away over 100 cows and now with the foot and mouth disease, it is even worse. It seems to me that the Minister is not understanding how the ball is playing and he is playing down the wrong line again. It seems to me that the Minister has been privileged of too much legal advice from Pat Russo.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...As it relates to cricket.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though this amendment looks like it is not controversial, it looks like a minor issue that the international organisations feel that Barbados should be part of their...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...it is not always everything, Sir, that we should jump and sign. Maybe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would warn the Minister of Labour that if they had not signed certain international conventions that maybe, we would not have certain problems within our legal system and we would not have to go and look for a Caribbean Court to deal with certain problems.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.
12.10 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member must recall that it was his Government in 1992, I think it was, which introduced in Barbados a law saying that no one under the age of 18 should be hanged. We were not in here. I have the records.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I happened to be away, just as you happened to be away in Zimbabwe recently. They did that pursuant, it was said, to international convention obligations.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No. I can. You were on a point of order.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes. You said a point of order. You cannot finish on a point of order. You were on a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very glad that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has reminded me that the Democratic Labour Party was bold enough to do things that were in their own conscience and were not influenced by international organisations.

It is shocking to see that the Honourable Member would make a point that a government that looks after its young people by making sure that they are given another opportunity to live that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would oppose something like that. I thought the point the Honourable Member was making was that they had some 'hard, sticky-back men' who committed crimes and we refused to hang them.

I cannot believe that the same people they are now bringing this amendment to protect, they are now saying that they should have been up to the gallows. I cannot believe that, Sir. This means that they are not really serious about this amendment and are only following the dictates of international organisations.

I am happy to know that I am associated with a Government that is capable of thinking on its own and not being dictated to by international organisations.

I thank you very much.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy go off on many a tantrum but I never thought that he could be so

irresponsible, so incorrect and so far out as to attempt to participate in a debate which amends an Act of this Parliament without even bothering to read the Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if he had only but taken the five minutes or so that it would have taken to read the Act...

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Of course, the Honourable Member himself has so cast a major aspersion on his role in Parliament that he should walk out now and not come back. He said we should not pay attention to law. How could we not, Sir?

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member who is well-known for misleading himself has just attempted to mislead the whole Parliament. I have never said such and I would ask the Honourable Member to correct himself for the first time in his life.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Cap. 346 of the Laws of Barbados, the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act specifically...

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: He is not interested in the laws of Barbados. Can you imagine that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has indicated that he is not interested in the Act that we are amending but yet he purports to make a presentation on an Act in which he has no interest and has not bothered to read.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the effect of the Act must depend on what is in the Act. The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act does not prevent children from gaining experience in the world of work. It seeks to protect children against certain heavy and exploitative work. For example, at section 2, it defines "industrial undertaking" and it says:

"Industrial undertaking" includes –

1. any mine, quarry and other work respecting the extraction of minerals from the earth.

As you know, that is heavy work. As the Honourable Minister of Labour has said, it is work which is above the physical or mental capacity of the child.

Sir, it also says:

2. any undertaking in which articles are manufactured...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that what he is now quoting is what the Honourable Member for St. Philip North said which is not true.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North said that the amendment would not affect children under the age of 16 from working in their vacation but that all other work it will affect. So I cannot see how the Honourable Member can now get up and put an interpretation to what was said by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North when he went on to say that it has nothing to do with dealing with the cow or the sheep.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, the Honourable Member is displaying his lack of familiarity with the Act. The Honourable Minister quite properly spoke to section 14 of the Act which speaks to the matter of tying the compulsory school age with undertakings of any kinds but then outside of that there are other special provisions for heavy work.

I can understand the Honourable Member for St. Lucy confusion, Sir, because he was part of a Party – he is obviously very proud of that past and would like to go back there - that was proud of taking children out of school at age 14. It was this Party, Sir, that raised the compulsory school age to 16. We have always long held the view that compulsory education is a very important social policy in this country, that is why section 14 of the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act says that:

1. “No person shall employ a child or young person of compulsory school age in any undertaking whatever during school hours.

It went on to say in subsection 2 of that section:

2. “Compulsory school age” and “school hours” have the meaning respectively assigned to them by section 2 of the Education Act.”

To ensure that a child’s education is not compromised, work of any kind for children of compulsory school age is out of the question. It does not however speak to any prohibition against children being in regular, safe employment.

As was indicated earlier, the main concern of this legislation, as with other similar pieces of legislation around the world, is with heavy undertakings such as industrial

undertakings; mining; quarrying; manufacturing; demolition of buildings; working at ports; working in the generation of electricity or motive power of any kind; undertaking construction; building; civil engineering or such other heavy undertakings.

Therefore, the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, while making it possible for children to gain work experience and to assist in other business undertakings generally does not permit the exposure of children to dangerous and heavy industrial type activity.

This legislation, either as it stands now or as it would be amended when passed later today, does not prevent a child from going into his parents’ shop and assisting with the work there and it does not prevent the child from gaining some experience and earning extra money as a take-out boy or girl at the supermarket. What it does, is to make sure that a child cannot go like now, when he should be in school and undertake employment, whether it is with his family or otherwise. Any of these children in the Public Gallery today can, according to the law as it exists now, gain valuable experience and earn additional funds by way of undertakings that are safe.

12.20 p.m.

The law is there to protect against exploitation in heavy industry and manufacturing, not to go against the social and cultural norms of Barbados, not to prevent us from doing things that all of us did when we were growing up and that our children continue to do. It will not prevent an eleven-year old under the supervision of its parents or its cousins from selling ackees during the vacation or after school.

It will not prevent the children of St. Lucy, notwithstanding what their Member of Parliament may want, from gaining experience and earning pocket money by making some sales. I am sorry that they have been inflicted with him and that he would want to prevent them from being able to embark in such laudable and lawful undertakings.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would, therefore, want to urge the Honourable Member when he comes to this Parliament to give us the courtesy of his very careful studies of the matters which are before us.

Sir, the Honourable Member also wanted to suggest that an amendment such as this or that this piece of legislation is of little importance to Barbados. He indicated that it has no importance whatsoever. While it is true that we can be very proud of the revolutionary changes that were driven by the political parties and the trade union movement in the post-1937 period, which have brought us to the point today where Barbados has a very proud record as far as child labour is concerned, there is also the fact that if Barbados and other countries do not join by way of implementing legislation to ratify the Convention, then those countries

against which we compete in the international community will be able to continue to exploit children to their economic advantage.

Sir, in Barbados, we willingly because of our social arrangements only employ adults. We pay wages that are higher than other countries in the world, ensure that there are good social conditions in place, ensure that successive governments have provided a good safety net, health care and education. How then can we be able to compete against imports or how will we be able to be competitive in our exports if the countries that we are competing against are employing child labour, paying them little or nothing, in some countries even making them slaves? You have heard the Honourable Minister indicate that according to the United Nations, of which the ILO is an affiliate body, there are some 120 million such persons out there.

We have, therefore, notwithstanding our very proud record, to join in the fight with other countries of the world to ensure that our competitive position is maintained. I can tell you, Sir, that I am satisfied that were it not for the strength of the legislation as it is and the strengthening of it that will come by the amendment that Barbados would have a child labour exploitation problem as well.

Sir, I remember my father speaking about his days as a boy at school when at his time it was a normal thing for persons to be funnelled out of their primary school into the pond grass gang. The pond grass gang was a gang of children who were a little small for the heavy agricultural employment of cutting canes or doing heavy work. You got into the fields by way of picking pond grass. I assume that Honourable Members know what pond grass is. It is a very soft tropical grass. You do not see a lot of it now. We used it as rabbit meat when we were boys.

The pond grass gang was an enormous avenue for children of a young age and it is to the credit of successive governments that we have been able to weed out that practice so that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy may say there is none, but there is none because we took decisions as a Parliament to put legislation in place to keep our employers honest, and we want other countries around the world to have employers who are as honest as ours as prescribed by the law.

This matter is also one of the examples of where wider policies impact on trade. The Honourable Member for the City, who is our Minister for Foreign Trade and who leads our WTO negotiations, would know that some of the key areas left to be negotiated relate to trade and environment and trade and labour standards in the new paradigm of international trade and where there is the plan by some countries to attach certain minimum standards as far as labour and environmental conditions are concerned to free trade. Those are positions that could actually help Barbados

for the very simple reason that we, of our own free will and accord, long before there was a WTO, had decided that as a matter of national policy we would ensure that we have adequate and very high standards of labour conditions and that we would also embark on a fairly sound environmental protection policy.

If there are international norms which are to be introduced, which will raise the bar for other countries, which currently compete with us because of disgraceful standards in those areas, then we can be helped as well.

This matter has important economic implications and is something which in the international community we need to support. Barbados has been at the forefront of work in support of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and this matter of child labour falls squarely within that. It is interesting to note, Sir, that according to the United Nations Development Programme, the Human Development Report of the year 2000, where they did a special feature on the progress of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, not only did Barbados feature prominently by way of its performance but the Convention on the Rights of the Child was one of the most ratified conventions – 191 countries in a ten-year period.

A notable exception, however, was Somalia on the one hand and the United States of America on the other. The United States has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child neither has Somalia but we believe and we have always been convinced that the children of our nation need the care of the adults in the society at their earliest years, whether that care be by way of protection from want, in terms of food and shelter, whether that care be for a loving and stimulating environment or whether that care be basic education or health care.

Barbados has as a matter of national policy always pursued that path of development and anything that we can do to force other nations to do, that represents a major contribution of Barbados to world development. We are not an island unto ourselves and therefore, we have to be very interested in these very high and lofty matters.

In seeking to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Sir, which has as its four fundamental principles: the principle of no discrimination against children, the principle that in all matters concerning children that their views would be taken into account; that the best interest of the child is primary; that the child has a right to life, survival and development which is really what this particular amendment turns on. Of course, as I mentioned earlier, the right of the child to express its views.

Sir, this Convention on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour really has been driven by the fact of exploitation in heavy work not suitable for children, not in stopping children from selling newspapers nor in doing work in their communities and the like.
12.30 p.m.

Sir, I want to say how please I am that Barbados continues to be at the forefront of this important aspect of international development and because Barbados has been a leader over many years, as a result of the efforts of the trade union movement and our political leaders, that we have not become so complacent as to believe that all is well, that because very few of the one hundred and twenty million children who are the targets of child labour are not from Barbados or, indeed, this part of the world, that it is not our interest and concern.

I want to applaud the Honourable Member for St. Philip North for having brought this....

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that one of the two members who have spoken said that this is none of our concern. That point has not been made in this House. I can only speak for myself but what I said is that I am not aware that the types of things spoken of by the Minister were occurring in Barbados. I do not want the impression to be given that we are passing this amendment because these things are occurring in Barbados.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: In conclusion I am pleased to support this Bill and I commend the Minister of Labour on its record in this particular aspect of its portfolio.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot compliment the Honourable Members on the Other Side other than for their performances in here this morning in seeking to give the impression that the Government really cares about the exploitation of workers. Unless the Government is arguing that Barbados has a large number of child workers and is seeking to protect them from exploitation, which I know is not the argument, then what we should be focusing on is the fact that the parents of these children should not be exploited.

Let us talk about the workers down at the Harbour Road working for \$90 a week in data processing industries, not being allowed to be unionised and represent their interest in the workplace. The Minister of Labour has not lifted a finger to assist any of them but he is bringing laws to protect child labour which does not exist in Barbados.

Let us talk about the workers employed by a foreign concern, the company ran out of money, the workers continued to work and no one knows to this day if they have received the wages that they were entitled to for the labour which they gave to the enterprise. The Government of Barbados, other than issuing the kind of pretty statements that we have heard in here today, has done nothing to protect those workers.

What about the domestics in Barbados who work for less than \$25 a day sometimes from 7 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening or until the family has had dinner, not a word from the Ministry of Labour about any of that. His priority is to bring laws in this Parliament to protect the exploited children of Brazil, Russia and the United States of America, over whom he has no control.

If you were to sit down in here with blinkers on you would believe that this Government is achieving something. In 1999, this Government was elected with some pledges in its Manifesto, not one of which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has been able to introduce. There was no minimum wage legislation which was his Government's full pledge:

"Implement a National Minimum Wage in an effort to ensure that all working Barbadians enjoy a satisfactory standard of living."

We had the introduction of VAT in 1997 that cut into the wages of Barbadian workers. We had a poverty report which said that fifteen thousand Barbadians were earning below the poverty line which means that the money they were receiving in wages was below \$171 a week which the IADB determined was the minimum necessary for them to survive in Barbados. Despite the fact that the Opposition said it would give one hundred percent support to the introduction of a national minimum wage as part of the process of social transformation, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North sees it as a priority to listen to the advice of an obscure legal luminary that it is his priority to define what child labour is.

The other pledges in the Manifesto were:

"Establish a tripartite tribunal for the resolution of industrial disputes."

"Create a Labour market and manpower information system aimed at facilitating universal and public access to manpower, labour market and working conditions in Barbados."

"To improve the delivery systems of the National Employment Bureau to ensure that job seekers are properly prepared, counselled and informed in their efforts to obtain placement in the work force."

“Enact in the new Parliamentary term a Trade Union Recognition Bill, an Unfair Dismissal Bill and an Occupational Health and Safety at Work Bill.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not one of these pledges have this Government been able to fulfill.

We have in Barbados a situation where a large number of claims which are made by workers to the National Insurance Office for compensation are rejected because those injuries are not recognised as workplace injuries as yet. For example, we have a situation with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome which affects a large number of women doing repetitive tasks which require the use of their hands, is not yet recognised by the National Insurance Office but the Minister's priority is to bring legislation in Barbados to redefine what child labour is. Meanwhile, those women do not get a cent from the National Insurance Office as a result of the injuries which they suffer in the workplace. The Minister cannot be serious. This is a waste of Parliamentary time. All of us in here are against child labour, let that be known. At the same time, I have to agree one hundred percent with the comments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that in Barbados many of us have grown up with an experience of working as children either during the vacation or during weekends.

I first worked at age eleven at Furniture Limited in the summer and then on Fridays with the St. Mary's Choir where I would sweep the building.

Asides.

12.40 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I was not a choir boy either. In those days they had television licenses and we used to go down to CBC and write up licenses. We worked doing landscaping and all kinds of tasks. All of us would have had experiences like this. They did not detract from our ability to study and perform well in school, in fact, they complemented it. Our parents did not have to buy school uniforms because you were able to get enough money to buy whatever items you needed to supplement the costs that they bore from the text books and those kinds of things. That is not new.

There is no child labour in Barbados to speak of. We have already declared that we are against it. We do not like to see it in other places. I cannot think that the Minister could make out a case. If he is going to make it out, let us have specifics of child labour taking place in Barbados.

In any event, as long as there is child labour in Barbados, the level of exploitation, which I have already mentioned, not even children will want to work in this

country if they were given a job. They are not going to want to go down the Harbour Road and work for \$90 a week when they could join the Barbados Youth Service and get a \$100 or go into the TVET project and get \$100 a week. The Government is not going to do anything, not lift a finger in anyway to assist those thousands of Barbadian women who are being disadvantaged in that way.

As I said, if you want to protect workers in this country, enact the legislation which would truly protect them; that will enhance their trade union rights; that will ensure that across all sectors in Barbados that you have minimum wages in place and that employers cannot pay below a minimum wage; that recurring and modern injuries in the work place are recognised by the National Insurance Department and that you have a Factories Act in this country.

The other day a gentleman in the Honourable Member for Christ Church East's constituency died in a fire. The Minister has not spoken about that but he wants to talk about exploitation. The matter may be *sub judice* so I do not know if I should speak about it. He died in a fire in a factory in this country. I remember the days when Don Blackman, then Minister of Labour, went across the length and breadth of Barbados visiting factories, he was then with the Barbados Labour Party but they rejected that approach, requiring employers to make fire exits available. Some of those buildings had 600 and 700 workers working in them and one entrance and exit.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It is still so in Barbados in the year 2001.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The point is, nobody was protecting me then and nobody is protecting the workers now, or else the Government would have moved swiftly when that young man died in that fire recently, to ensure that the employer was, in fact, conforming to safety practices to ensure that if there were threats to workers, that those workers do not lose their lives unnecessarily.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East did not think that was an issue. What we would have seen is the charred remains of a hard working young Barbadian man trapped in a corner of a building and not a word from the Government. Yet, you are passing laws in here with a lot of nancy-stories about child labour in Brazil, Russia and all over the place, but not a single piece of legislation has been introduced in six years in office to enhance the status of workers in Barbados and to protect them from exploitation.

If you go onto the blocks in this country, one of the most common statements that is made, in ignorance in many cases, but also in some cases with much justification, as in the incidences which I mentioned. After getting a secondary education I am not going into anybody's business to work for \$90 or \$120 a week.

Any young man who abduces that particular argument...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You are not giving that much more than that now. You are giving them \$100 a week which is \$20 a day. That can barely buy lunch and pay bus fare. Bus fare would come to about \$6 a day, if you are catching four buses and lunch money is another \$10. Do not come with that argument. That is a non argument.

I am talking about people whose labour is being employed to build an enterprise, who have families to feed and who have responsibilities and bills to pay. On top of that you have the Value Added Tax. Those are the people who we are supposed to be defending and speaking for in here.

We are not in here to create straw men and then knock them down to give the impression that we are in some great social enterprise in Barbados and some act of some great social enterprise in Barbados, and some act of some major engineering when we bring legislation that deals with child labour in a country where child labour does not exist. We will be engaged in social engineering if we were tackling some of those major concerns which infect the labour in Barbados and make the plight of workers an extremely difficult experience, even in the year 2001.

Therefore, I am calling on the Minister, urgently, to address those matters which were identified in his Manifesto in particular, to introduce legislation to deal with the question of unfair dismissal in Barbados; to work assiduously towards the introduction of legislation which would ensure that no Barbadian worker is earning below a certain minimum wage in Barbados; and that, particularly those who are most affected by poor wages; like those in the industrial sector; those working at domestic, private homes, tourism and agriculture, who are earning way below what the Government itself has acknowledged as a fair and reasonable wage in this country, to meet the most basic of obligation to their family and to the society.

I am calling on the Government to introduce, as soon as possible, the Trade Union Recognition Bill, so that workers in Barbados would have no doubt about their right to organise and to support a union of their choice and to bargain for improved conditions of work, improved salary and all of the other incidences which are attached to their labour.

Workers in Barbados are involved in building enterprise in which people benefit significantly. Almost every private sector company in Barbados has been saying, particularly the larger ones, that they are enjoying record profits and those record profits are not always translated meaningfully for the average Barbadian worker. That had not, in any way, stirred the Minister into action today.

He saw as it remit to talk about child labour and even if 20 000 had marched down to Parliament today to complain about working conditions in Barbados, he was going to talk about child labour, a phenomenon that does not exist in our country. He was going to talk about the exploitation of children because it sounds good; it is backed by the ILO and it has an international flavour, but when you assess what is happening on the ground in Barbados, you will find that there is a large number of persons completely untouched by this legislation.

As I said, none of the young people that you all had been appealing to all morning will ever want to work in Barbados as long as there is an environment of exploitation in which they are not getting a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. In which they believe that if they have a health injury that they are going to be compensated fairly and that the National Insurance Department is going to cover the injuries that occur in the workplace; that all of the other areas of concern which any modern country seeking to build a cohesive society which labour plays a major role would be brought to the fore.

12.50 p.m.

That is what is lacking from this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that it is a tragedy that the focus of the Government has been turned away since the 1999 Elections – assuming that this is a genuine document – from the pledges that it made in the 1999 Manifesto, to matters that are not even significant in the context of the social and economic realities of Barbados in the year 2001.

The Minister, therefore, needs to remove the scales from his eyes and to open his mind, not to the international realities but to the local realities and to the concern of Barbadians in the year 2001. I thank you.

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

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I hear of the term "child labour", I think in terms of oppressive child labour, I think in terms of exposing children of tender years to harsh and vicious conditions and in all of this, I seem to remember David Copperfield and Oliver Twist and their experiences and how children were very badly abused during the days of the Industrial Revolution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the position is that if one looks at Cap. 346 Employment (Miscellaneous) Provision 1977. The Act, at the time, defined the term “young person” as a person at least 15 years, but under the age of 18 years and defined the term “child” as a person under the age of 15 years old.

As you know Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbados has been very serious about meeting its international obligations and while it is true that Barbados has never traded its sovereignty in favour of acceding to some foreign, alien or higher force, the fact of the situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that times warrant that when countries are faced with international duties that these countries are very serious about them. Time will show that Barbados has been setting an excellent example, not only by identifying with progressive regimes that would better mankind generally, but also by always ensuring that the Barbados legal position is not at variance with its international obligations.

Over two hundred years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a philosopher called John Austin said that if international law did not have teeth, it would be nothing but public morality and he argued that the international law, to which he was exposed, was largely unenforceable and in time the practice developed that where local municipal law conflicted with international law, the local municipal law would prevail. It, therefore, means that if a given country has local law and at the same time has signed an international obligation and the local law is out of sync with that international obligation then the obligation is, in John Austin’s words, public morality, unenforceable and such like.

You will no doubt recall, Mr. Deputy Speaker that this Parliament – of which you have been part and may you always be part for as long as you want and for some considerable time – has more than once brought legislation here to ensure that where Barbados had been signatory to a treaty or an international convention, that Barbados would enact the law into local Barbados law to make it law. Suppose for example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Barbados was serious about the Montego Bay Convention on the Law of the Sea, the best thing for Barbados to have done was to pass that into Barbados law and that was done. There is not a country, Mr. Deputy Speaker that has never passed that into their law, obviously reserving the rights, while knowing Austin’s position, to break the law, whenever it suited them, or on the ground that they never passed it in their law and, therefore, they would not be duty-bound.

What the Honourable Minister of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform is doing today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is reforming the existing law in a way to make it consistent with international obligation that Barbados is serious about following and nothing can detract from that. There was a case before the English House of Lords called the *Black-Clawson International Ltd v Papierwerke Waldhos-*

Aschassenburg A.G. 1975 AC, page 591. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy will do well to look at that case. In that case the question of interpreting local law along international law came up and one thing that the learned law lords said, Mr. Deputy Speaker – and this is for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy – is that you should look at all similar legislations together.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy unfortunately delivered of himself today a peroration devoid of any information as to the source of the amendment and was heard in this House to say that perhaps this is nothing more than a smart attempt to make unemployment statistics appear different from what they really are by keeping children in school. He hinted at that. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy suggested before this Honourable House that one reason why we are reluctant to let people under 16 work is that we want to cleverly tinker with unemployment statistics. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy also said that there is an evolving culture where, the more you put younger people at work the more enterprise you give them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to refer the Honourable House, and in particular the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, to Cap. 346 –

- 8.2: For the purposes of apprenticeship or vocation training in a specified industry or undertaking that is required to be carried on continuously, the Minister may, after consultation with workers’ and employers’ organizations concerned, authorize the employment, during the day and even the night of the young persons.”

So, the culture of exposing youths to practical training remains.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East came close to mentioning it when he made a very good speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where further on:

12. This Part does not apply to children:
3. in technical schools, on school ships or training ships under the supervision of a teacher or person authorized by the Minister responsible for Education; or
4. any industrial undertaking or ship in which only members of the same family are employed.

There is no question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a culture of children on vacation or weekends selling

newspapers and nuts if it is called child labour at all – would be very much soft, not oppressive, very often allowed by parents. We have a whole range of other things happening in Barbados. I can think about a scheme run by the Chamber of Commerce where youngsters between 14 and 16 were given working experience through a process called Junior Achievement.

Both Governments, the present and that of which those Honourable Members would have been part of, have allowed children work experience.

The Barbados Community College now, in some of its modules, insists that children can only graduate if they get some measure of work experience and to tell the truth, Government is in that too because I am aware that there are youngsters coming out of the Barbados Community College within a short time who, at the present time, are employed in Government departments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not reluctant on this Side to do our best for the workers. In fact, in his opening remarks the Honourable Minister indicated that in the process of time more and more employment related legislations will be coming. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not going to agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that we are putting an end to helping young persons get job experience, nor are we going to agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that by keeping children in school we are not exposing them to employment and, therefore, pretending that unemployment is not the problem that he sees it to be, instead what we are doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is clearly ensuring that we, as a small developing nation, can set an example to other countries that where we are part of an international process, by which we agree to be bound by certain terms that we are so serious as to enact counterpart legislations into our local law because as I said earlier, where local law conflict with international law, local law prevails.

1.00 p.m.

Sir, to give effect to international law in terms of the Black-Clawson case that I raised earlier, you pass it into your municipal or local law and it becomes law. If you leave it in the way the Americans have with the Montego Bay Law of the Sea Convention, then you would not be bound.

The American lawyers are not bound by the Montego Bay Law of the Sea Convention because even though they signed the Treaty, they have not passed it into American law so it is not American law. If it is in conflict with whatever they have as law...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I believe that the Honourable Member is speaking in error when he makes the point that where

international law and local conflict that local law takes precedence. That is in fact not so.

It is a well settled legal principle that international law, treaty law and otherwise takes precedence over local law. You can check it yourself and you will see, particularly if there is a treaty or a convention, that is the way it is incorporated. It is as simple as that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please proceed.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I fear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my understanding of the legal position here is truly at variance and in conflict with the Honourable Member for St. John, who just spoke like the retired lawyer that he said he was, having become a full time Opposition Leader.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are learned and distinguished lawyers on this Side, far more learned and distinguished than the Honourable Member for St. John who could condemn me or accuse me as wrong, if I am wrong. There is no question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the local municipal law of a sovereign country is the law of that country and if that country signs a convention, without passing it into its local law as far as this humble servant understands it, it is not the law of the country. I believe that I am correct.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. A convention standing by itself does not amount to an international law. The point which the Honourable Member for St. James North made and he repeats it is that where international law, which is treaty law, and local law conflict that local law takes precedence. A convention is not an international law. A treaty is an international law. Even though you say I am retired, that is basic knowledge that any student of law or otherwise, will be aware of.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the Honourable Member for St. John was a boy, ten years after being born a Christmas of the certain year, it was popular in those days to call almost every international agreement a treaty. In time, the term convention has evolved and it is used interchangeably with treaty.

The Honourable Member for St. John, retired lawyer though he is, is still seeking to demonstrate a measure of forensic skill but is, I dare say, failing to achieve the desired point.

What we desire on this Side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is as I was saying before the interruption – and I would not call it a rude interruption – is that if we, as a sovereign country showing a maturity to fulfill what we are duty bound to do, as going to be serious, then we have to do it the right way.

There is no question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my colleague on my left, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and Minister of Labour is doing this thing the right way. I do not agree either that we do not have the mischief of child labour in Barbados, strange things happen.

If you are aware of what is happening in Barbados, you see children in school uniform all over the place in Barbados at awkward times. Some of those children are exposed to all sorts of vices including doing things for money during school time, which we do not want. What we are aiming to do is to set a statutory age below which children are not going to be made to labour, especially in oppressive circumstances. What we are also doing for purposes of Chapter 346, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is clearly distinguishing between, ‘child’, as being under 16 years of age and ‘young person’ as being between 16 and 18 years of age.

I would have agreed, fifteen to twenty years ago that the way Barbados was at that time, no one would have dared break this law, yet you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this law was reformed in 1977, perhaps in response to an emerging problem or emerging problems then.

I feel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that any responsible Parliament, in keeping with the times, must be alert to what is going on in a given policy and respond to ensure whatever its international obligations are that what it is doing for the country is in the best interest of this country.

There would have been a time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we would have assumed that little children under 16 years old would have been told by their parents not to go by ‘A’ to earn money, whether in school time or not, or not to go by ‘B’ to do something for money. Sir, the way things are in this country now, we have to be aware of the fact that there are people in Barbados called, paedophiles who would abuse children. I will conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just as I started.

When you think in terms of child labour, you do not think just in terms of a little child helping out in the family shop or somebody going to junior achievement. You think of what exactly is being curtailed in the definition section of

Chapter 346 and the definition section, subject to very few exceptions, forbids children under 16 years from labouring in mines, quarries, or in heavy industries or in heavy civil engineering works, construction work, maintenance and demolition works and such like, along with a few other curbs on what children should do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, I see nothing wrong with bringing the amendment at this time. The amendment has my support, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I trust that this signals to all in Barbados that the Government is mindful of the need to protect the rights of the children in every way and at every level.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that further consideration of this Bill be postponed.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 2.30 p.m. this afternoon.

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

The question that this House do now suspend until 2.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.
1.10 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to wind up the debate and to thank Honourable Members on this Side for their contribution and the support which they have given for this amendment.

It was Shakespeare who said that the devil can cite scriptures for his own purpose. If I had to go into a Sunday School and the devil was the Sunday School teacher, I would run out as fast as possible. When I hear the Leader of the Opposition speaking about workers and this party

exploiting workers and doing nothing for workers who are being exploited, I wonder, Sir, if he remembers which period in Barbados was the hardest period that workers of this country ever had to endure. I wonder if he remembers the hardships that the workers had to endure in the early 1990's.

Speaking about young people not wanting to work now, this party was not the party that crushed the will of the workers in this country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this party was not the party that choked the living daylight out of the workers of this country. This party was not the party that pulled out the tongues of the workers of this country. This party was not the party that played football with the rights of workers to their salaries. This party was not the party that looked the workers straight in their faces and told them to take it, like it or lump it and up to now the workers of this country have not yet recovered. So I do not see why people should come now and pretend that they are champions of the workers.

When I assumed office, as Minister of Labour, I did not find one single piece of labour legislation anywhere at the Ministry. You would have thought that having put the workers through what they went through that workers' protection legislation would be there in place. I can safely say, that I have a very thick, it is about two inches thick, Safety and Health Bill. I also have the Employment Protection legislation, the Trade Union Recognition legislation and the Minimum Wage legislation.

The thing about it, is that I have always thought that the employment protection legislation would have been the most controversial. We have had long discussions on it and this would be the first piece of legislation to be brought to Parliament. The other piece of legislation coming after this will be the Safety and Health legislation which is already in the hands of employers and the trade unions because we are going to be discussing that next.

As I have said, when I went to the Ministry of Labour I did not find a single piece of legislation anywhere but anybody who walks in the Ministry of Labour tomorrow as Minister of Labour, could find there all those pieces of legislation ready. It is just the consultative process now that we have to go through, so I am pleased. It is true that we have not actively brought the legislation to Parliament but the legislation is there.

I did not find, as I said, one single piece of legislation and now we can hear all of this from the Honourable Member for St. John. He is now the top advocate for the workers. The same person who advocated the bus fare and the lunch money is now the top advocate for the workers of this country.

I remember distinctly, when we brought an amendment to this House almost immediately on assuming office that we were going to vow regardless of the circumstances, we were not going to cut workers salaries again in this country, that the Honourable Member for St. John did not vote with us. So the workers out there know him and he cannot fool them that he is now the top advocate for any workers' rights in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, where the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is concerned, I want to make this point to him that the law is already there. He spoke this morning as though we were bringing a brand-new piece of law to this Parliament. This is the way he was saying it, when this amendment is passed, all hell will break loose. That was his theme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was to exhibit total ignorance of what is happening because all we have come to this Parliament to do is to change the age from 15 to 16. We are not bringing any new law. The law is there already and it was always in place. We are not bringing anything new to say that when you do this thing now something is going to happen, otherwise, it would have been happening all along. We are only changing the age from 15 to 16. There was no magic in it. Anybody coming in here would have thought that we are bringing legislation to do this thing and the next to the children. All we are doing is changing the age because what they told us is that Barbados looks good. All the other pieces of legislation were in order. It was just this one amendment that we had to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the parent law was always there and it was not put there for style. It was put there because it was to correct a mischief. The Honourable Member was giving the impression that the very parent law was not needed either but you would not have had the parent law in place unless there was some mischief some time in the past that the law had to correct. That is exactly what has happened. That law was there from the 1970s. Now we are hearing that when this is passed this thing will happen and the next thing will happen. That shows total ignorance of what is going on.

In the circumstances, Sir, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

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

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

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 2, inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the DEPUTY SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2001.

2.40 p.m.

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Estimates of Expenditure for Barbados for the fiscal year 2001-2002 and the Schedule of Personal Emoluments for the year 2001-2002. However, Members will get their copies in a matter of minutes.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I beg to give notice of the Appropriation Bill, 2001.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I beg to move that the Appropriation Bill, 2001 be read a first time.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Sir, 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, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on this Money Resolution, Mr. Duncan CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

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

ORDER NO. 9 – RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$3 319 384 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO

PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES, 2000-2001 AS SHOWN IN THIS SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 2000-2001, NO. 9 WHICH FORMS THE SCHEDULE TO THIS RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 13 BE AMENDED AS SHOWN IN SCHEDULE NO.2

HEAD 13 – PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE – \$755,143

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, at this time of the year Government Departments for a variety of reasons are running short of funds. Much of this is occasioned by events taking place during the current fiscal year which could not have been anticipated at the time when the Estimates were passed in the previous March. It is necessary from time to time to come to get this House to appropriate additional provision to enable the departments to meet their obligations until the 31st of March.

Sir, the Estimates Debate will take place from next Monday, 12th March, 2001 beginning at 10 o'clock in the morning and a number of Heads will, of course, be debated and Honourable Members will have ample opportunity to debate incisively those various Heads which are called. I would anticipate in the usual way the Prime Minister's Heads would be called early. In his absence today, Sir, I am required to seek supplementary provision for Head 13 – Prime Minister's Office under a number of Objects.

In the first place, Sir, under Other Personal Emoluments, the sum of \$42 870 is required to pay salaries for the Secretary/Coordinator and Stenographer attached to the Committee for National Reconciliation and also the salaries for the post of Chief Research Officer with effect from January last year.

Under EX03 – National Insurance Contributions, the sum of \$2 906 is required to meet the cost of National Insurance Contributions which are consequential upon the extension of posts for the persons in the Committee of National Reconciliation and in relation to the creation of the post of Chief Research Officer. The amount required there is \$45 776.

Under Programme 041 – National Defence and Security Preparedness, Sub-programme 042 – General Security, Item 2EX06 – Travel, the sum of \$7 724 is required to meet estimated expenditure up until the end of the current financial year. What has happened is that claim for the previous financial year came late and were paid out of funds voted for this financial year. But the total amount required is \$7 724.

In relation to Sub-programme 043 – The Barbados Defence Force, Government is seeking \$75 000 to provide for certain equipment for the Barbados Defence Force such as bullet proof vests and so on which are a necessary part for military organizations. Honourable Members will recall that last year the Government took the significant and bold initiative to decide that for the foreseeable future it would re-equip the Police Force, Defence Force and the Fire Service by the provision of a large set of vehicles to improve the mobility of those disciplined Forces and to enhance the responsiveness of those Forces. Suppliers credit was arranged with some firm called NSG, who sourced vehicles for those three Forces. I should have mentioned the fourth Force, the Prison Service. Honourable Members would have seen the prison's new vehicles on the road.
2.50 p.m.

There is a need for us to raise \$680 143 to cover the cost of 11 Pajero vehicles, which are part of the package for the Defence Force and those vehicles are presently stored at BS&T motors and we cannot get them until we pay for them, so we need \$680 143. The total amount under this sub-programme for the Defence Force is therefore, \$755 143.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I have a number of questions which I hope the Honourable Attorney-General would be in a position to answer relative to this Head. The first is what is the full cost of the Committee for National Reconciliation for the entire work programme that the Committee undertook. I believe the work of the Committee is now submitted, even though the public has not been accorded the opportunity of seeing the contents of the Report, but I would like to know what the full expenditure for the Committee's work amounts to.

I notice that part of the \$42 870 is required to meet the cost of salary for the post of Chief Research Officer at the level of S6 with effect from January 2000. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in reply to a Parliamentary Question asked by me on November 2, 1999, Government produced a list of 2 637 temporary posts that were purported to be created between September 6, 1994 and September 30, 2000. A careful perusal of this Reply under Prime Minister's Office, Head 13, I see nowhere in that reply the position of Chief Research Officer at the level of S6 having been created.

You will note it said the cost of salary for the post of Chief Research Officer S6, with effect from January 2000. The post was not created prior to September, 1994 because there is no such post in the current Civil Establishment and that would mean that this Reply is a misleading one because

it does not include a position. Either that, or we are voting money for a position that has not been created and there seems to be some anomaly that needs clarification in that regard. I would like to know.

I see a number of new posts created – Senior Research Officer, Senior Research Analyst at the level of S5 and Z6-1. Public Relation Officers - we would know that those kinds of posts would be created. If we went through the list, I would have to ask what any of them are for, but that would be a bit previous of me. The point is that I do not see the position of Chief Research Officer and I would like to know what the terms of reference are, because even when I look in the back of the Reply where the Government has set out in Appendix 2, what they call the job statements, under the heading Chief Research Officer there is no job statement for such a position. In fact, it says the post is called Chief Research and Planning Officer. I do not know if that is the same thing or whether it is a new position.

I believe that needs to be clarified because it would mean either that the supplementary is wrong, seeking money for a post that has not been created or it would mean that the Reply to the Parliamentary Question is wrong but both cannot be correct and that needs some clarification.

The second point relates to the expenditure of \$75 000 on the cost of body armour to be used by the Barbados Defence Force. I want to make my position clear, Mr. Chairman, that unless the Attorney-General can assure me that the Royal Barbados Police Force has been fully supplied with all the equipment that it needs to carry out the fight against crime in Barbados I will not be supporting this particular supplementary.

I suspect, based on what I have been reading and hearing, that there are still some glaring deficiencies in relation to the equipment needed by the Police Force to carry out their task. I know that the Attorney-General has been very assiduous in seeking to ensure that the Police Force is fully equipped but here we have a supplementary which is seeking to equip the Barbados Defence Force. Therefore, if the Attorney-General can satisfy me that the Police Force is fully equipped and there are no gaps in the requirements for the Police Force, I will only vote on this on his word. I hope that once we have voted for it that we would not hear that having given the Defence Force body armour that the Police Force in Barbados is deficient in some important aspect of its work.

We have made it clear on this Side that we will give 100 per cent support to any effort needed to upgrade the terms and conditions of police officers, the equipment that they need and other supports that are necessary to carry out the fight against crime. I give no such assurance that we will

do so for the Defence Force because we believe that the proper place for the work of dealing with the problem of patrols against crime should be the Police Force. If the Government is satisfying the needs of the Barbados Defence Force at the expense of the Royal Barbados Police Force, we on this Side would oppose it.

This brings us to the question of the cost of the 11 Pajero vehicles. Once again, the only way that one could support such a supplementary is if you were fully satisfied that all of the vehicles and equipment needs of the Royal Barbados Police Force have been met. As long as the Attorney-General, acting on advice, satisfies the Chamber that the needs of the Royal Barbados Police Force have been met, one could argue that because of the existence of joint patrols that you need the equipment; but I am still not satisfied that the needs of the Royal Barbados Police Force have been entirely satisfied, even with the injection of the funds for new equipment. Therefore, my own view is that this supplementary giving the Barbados Defence Force an additional 11 jeeps is at the expense of putting that \$680 000 to the use of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member has misunderstood. This is part of the original package from last year. That is all it is, not anything additional.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am not disputing that but the people who designed the package, as far as I know, were the Minister responsible for Home Affairs and the Minister responsible for Defence, not NSG Exporters Ltd., even though there may be a connection between NSG Exporters Ltd. and the Barbados Labour Party. You should not mix that up to mean that they designed the package.

They are providing the finance in many respects to the Government but it does not mean that they determine which organisation was to get the money. If you have a package of \$7 million – I do not remember what the figure was originally – I assume that they provided that financing based on the Government's policy. This is what we give to the Police, this is what we give to the Defence Force and this is what we give to the Fire Service and this is what we give to the prison officers.

Even though it is part of a package, that package would have been designed by Government. All NSG Exporters Ltd. are doing, to the best of my knowledge and information and belief, and I stand to be corrected, is finding the source and getting a large commission. I hope the Attorney-General will indicate what the size of that commission is.
3.00 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You can find out because there are people out there who know the company, the principals, the employees and the relationship between them and Members of the Barbados Labour Party so it will not be difficult for you to find out who they are.

I am not going to give you the information because I may stand to be corrected in some slight particulars but I am certain that there are Members on that Side who can give you chapter and verse when the company was formed, who the principals are, who received the commission, who the employees are and what the connection is between the principals and a large landowner and business magnate in Barbados. All that information, I believe the public may know. They may not know it from this debate but I urge you as the Attorney-General to check with your colleagues because they know a little more than you do.

Sir, I am saying that eleven jeeps for the Defence Force are being identified in the package as priority in terms of the expenditure of the \$7 million. I am assuming that those eleven jeeps are being acquired when they are deficiencies in relation to equipment that the Police Force needs to fight crime in Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas has to give us the assurance that he is satisfied that nothing is being done to denude the responsibilities of the Royal Barbados Police Force and that nothing is being done to give the Defence Force a claim on resources which do not properly fall to them because of the nature of their responsibilities under the Act.

I also understand that the marshals of the Supreme Court have requested body armour. I want to know whether the Government has responded to their request for body armour or whether the Government is likely to respond to their request for that body armour.

Mr. Chairman, those are the most important questions that I have to ask so far.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I am searching the files but I cannot find anything to tell me the full cost of the Committee for National Reconciliation.

Sir, as for the creation of the post, what I can tell the Honourable Member is that in relation to the Secretary/Coordinator, \$26 572 were provided under Other Personal Emoluments to meet the costs of those posts. In respect of the post of Chief Research Officer this post has been created and has been filled with effect from January

2000. Salary for this officer for the three months is \$15 772, the monthly salary being \$5 257 51.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I think the file should say January 2001 otherwise he would not need a salary for three months, the salary would be for one year and three months. It would be the whole of last year plus the three months to end of this fiscal year. It is clear that this position was created in 2001. The record should be corrected to reflect that.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, the records will be corrected in due course to reflect that it is the year 2001 and not 2000.

In relation to the Barbados Defence Force and the Royal Barbados Police Force, I do not think it is useful to try to create a division between the police and the Defence Force, to show a love for one and skepticism for the other.

Sir, the \$75 000 is to buy body armour for eighty officers of the Defence Force. If the Honourable Member would check the Estimates for this year at page 110, he will see that this year \$600 000 was voted this year and that he supported the vote. Sir, I promise the Honourable Member that next week we will vote more money for more bulletproof vest for the police.

Sir, every year, subject to the financial ability of Government, we try to do more and more in terms of improving the equipment of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Some of the equipment which will be bought in the coming year is of a very sophisticated nature, about which I will not speak or be forced to speak, but it will have very important and overarching effect on crime in Barbados.

Sir, nobody should doubt that character of crime in Barbados in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 has changed, not only in Barbados but through this region and internationally. The Honourable Member said two weeks ago that people worldwide have a tough time now dealing with crime. Sir, in Britain, it is out of synch.
3.10 p.m.

The Sunday Times, Sunday before last, reported that it is now less safe than America. That is a phenomenon. England is now less safe than America. England is only number two to Australia, which is the worst in the world and we are not talking about South Africa. You can go on the internet, get the *Sunday Times* and see it. They had 29 murders by guns in the last year.

For the 10 years that I lived in England, in 1967, there were no guns. The first time that I ever heard gun shots in England was September, year before last. I was on a little holiday, after I came back from China I stayed by my daughter's place. The night about 11 o'clock I heard what

sounded to me like gunshots. The Monday I spoke to the police and they told me yes that there was gang warfare, the same kind of thing that you get in the Caribbean. It is bad in England, black on black killings and muggings.

Therefore, if it is recognised that the type of crime has changed, then it would be a very foolish Government not also to ensure that the response by the law enforcement agencies must also change. If we know that men out there have guns and are doing foolishness with guns, the police must be equipped to respond commensurately.

I do not care that if every year the United States Government writes the same thing in a report about Barbados on human rights and lambaste the Police Force. I came back here on Sunday and saw something in the newspaper about the same thing last year.

Imagine the United States Government would criticise the Royal Barbados Police Force because last year a man in Christ Church, in the Searles area, known to be an incorrigible drug abuser went berserk, with drugs on him, armed with a cutlass and killed Commander Briggs. When the police turned up with Sergeant Boyce, the man lashed at him, cut him and he was hospitalised. All Sergeant Boyce did was to fire a shot and he was put down. In defending himself, can you imagine that the United States Government published that was police brutality. What nonsense and ignorant people.

I do not mind being quoted when I say ignorant people, ignorant because they do not understand the law. The law is very simple. The case of Palmer, 1970 – the case of Palmer holds, let me put the law clearly. I hope that the Press can carry it because this is for all law enforcement people and the man in the street.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The case of Palmer has been the guiding precedent, all of us must know, as men in the street and law enforcement officers. In the face of a violent attack where it is reasonably apprehended that you can be in danger, the person in danger is entitled to respond in a way necessary, retaliatory action without measuring to a nicety the extent of that retaliatory action.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: If you reasonably apprehend danger or in the face of an attack, you are entitled to respond with necessary, retaliatory action and you are not required and I quote the Privy Council, "To measure an exact nicety the extent of that retaliatory action." That is to say a man coming at you with a cutlass, chopping wild and in a

frenzy, you are not supposed to stop and say I wonder if I should look for a rock heap, should I duck, look for a stick or anything. If you have a gun take it out and shoot.

Dwight Ward used to address the jury, the best criminal Judge that we ever had in this country, the law of self defense, very simple, kill before you are killed.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let us get this clear. The Police Force, while I have responsibility for it, will be equipped as they tell me what they require and if we cannot give them all in one year it will be given in increments.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I cannot tell you fully that they are fully equipped. We have to give things incrementally because we are not a country with limitless resources.

As far as the Marshals are concerned, I have not received any requests from the Marshals of the Court Process Department. I know, however, that they have a concern that, perhaps, they should have firearms or access to firearms. The Attorney General has nothing to do with firearm licences except in the law of 1998, for the first time in the history of Barbados, I gave the right of review to a person who applied for a firearm, if refused, he can appeal or apply for a review of the Commission's decision to me. The issuance of a firearm licence to have, use or hold a firearm is a matter for the Commissioner of Police not for me. They must deal with the Commissioner of Police. If he refuses, then they have a right of review by me. That is the law.

3.20 p.m.

Sir, I think I have answered the questions. I will assure the Honourable Member that I will undertake some investigation about NSG and so on. I do not know who they are but when you raise it then I will question it because I would like to know who are those people.

Now, Sir, the Honourable Member did ask about the Barbados Defence Force, the vehicle package. In relation to the vehicle package last year when we initiated the package the estimated cost of the package was \$7,178, 485 including finance and bank charges, and let me just remind Honourable Members how these packages were negotiated.

The then Director of Finance and Planning, who is now Ambassador Erskine Griffith, headed a committee which

comprised the Chief of Staff and his Officers, the Commissioner of Police and his Officers, the Chief Fire Officer and his Officers, and they were asked to develop a package of vehicles and equipment that would serve them over the next five years, that was the strategic plan in terms of what types of vehicles that they would all need. The Committee received the proposals from various firms – I remember the Barbados Fire Service had one from AngloCo, who had been the traditional suppliers to the Barbados Fire Service, there was NSG and somebody else that tendered, and that committee ultimately decided who they were going with and the amounts, and we came here to this House and voted the money.

In relation to the Barbados Defence Force, they had developed a phrased procurement approach and during this current Financial Year, the Barbados Defence Force, as all Honourable Members would have observed, received not all of their vehicles, they only received the first shipment, because we are looking at equipment for five years, but all will come in now...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no. First shipment cost \$3,344,685 on top of a down payment – remember we had to come at this time last year to raise by supplementary the down payment and the down payment for the Barbados Defence Force was \$1,076,773, that left a balance of \$2,267,912 which was provided for in the current Estimate. It appeared that there was a misunderstanding with the suppliers and that the eleven Pajero Jeeps should have been part of the phase 2 allocation but were shipped to Barbados. They are here in storage and will of course in charges, so this money is to pay for the – if you like – early arrival of these eleven vehicles which are part of the phase 2 that came in earlier. That is it Sir, and I hope that Honourable Members are satisfied with the answers. I beg to move, Sir that Head... no, sorry, sorry.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Not so fast, not so fast.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on this particular Head 30 and to say I find it rather strange Sir, that the Government of Barbados can find \$680,000 to pay for eleven vehicles for the Barbados Defence Force based on the information of which we are not required to have until 2001-2002 – and if I am wrong I would like to be corrected at this point in time. The Royal Barbados Police Force, who have just received many new vehicles have those same vehicles parked at Warrens, in a place called Barbados Shipping and Trading (BS&T), for things such as

disc pads and other minor things and the Police Force cannot get back their vehicles, but we can find ourselves in a situation, unless the problem has been solved now, where new vehicles were being treated as though they were being written-off, because they were parked at BS&T for things like disc pads and the garage refused to repair them and to allow the Police Force to get back their vehicle when they wanted them...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You hear what I tell you. You know I do not talk for the sake of talking. No, that is not true. Mr. Chairman, I am putting it to you that the Police Force had new vehicles in the workshop that they could not use because of a simple thing such as a disc pad because the particular garage refused to touch the vehicle until they got money up front and the Royal Barbados Police Force had to depend on the Barbados Defence Force for their vehicles in order to carry out certain operations. The Royal Barbados Police Force sometimes could not respond to certain calls because of the lack of vehicles, not that they did not have new vehicles. But I want to take this a step further, Mr. Chairman...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, of course it is the best Police Force in Barbados because we have three forces now, all related to the Police. I am putting it a step further, Sir. If a garage could import eleven vehicles earlier than you asked, and you are prepared to come to the House of Assembly to fork out nearly \$¾ million – it is less than \$¾ million but we are going to square off some figures – how is it that said garage could not do the work on the Police vehicles and release the vehicles to do the work for the people of Barbados. I am saying that something is wrong here, Sir, because even when you look at the period, it is less than 2 months before and I am speaking at the time the Police Force had the particular problem, the end of the year.

So I am saying that in a public spiritedness that the garage should have used the initiative to understand that if we are in the tourist season, that the vehicles would have been needed to protect the lives of Barbadians and tourist alike, and that those vehicles should have been put on the road.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am glad that you know who is up there.

Sir, I am saying that we need to make sure that these things do not happen. We cannot have a police force with vehicles, especially new vehicles, and they cannot have access to them and at the same time we are buying armoured

vehicles of which we have uses for, and not only that we also have eleven Pajeros for the Barbados Defence Force that we do not need at this point in time, but the Royal Barbados Police Force cannot get their vehicle to use.

I want to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Thomas for his new role, he is now in charge of the police force 100 per cent. He is not now sharing that duty with the Governor-General. He is in charge and at large. In his own admission today, and I know that he will agree with me on this point, he has admitted in this Assembly that the Police Force all over the world is not the same Police Force as he knew when he was a student and when he was working in London. He is also saying that the job is so difficult that he now has to give them special equipment with which to work.

I am saying, Sir, that by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas own admission, he is now recognizing that to solve crime is now greater and they have the capacity to solve the crime when he gives them the equipment. He also has to recognize that if you upgrade a man in terms of work you also have to upgrade him in terms of pay and that is why I am now asking the Prime Minister of Barbados to look after the Royal Barbados Police Force. I am now asking the Minister responsible for the Royal Barbados Police Force to bring the necessary package before Parliament and I will support you, and I can guarantee you that my comrade will support you too. So all the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has to do is to bring the necessary package before this Parliament and he will get full support from the Opposition.

I understand him now, and I know that the first time I see a request from the Honourable Member of St. Thomas that there will be wide support in this Parliament. I know of no Honourable Member in this Parliament who recognizes the importance of the Police Force today in fighting crime and the problem that crime will create for Barbadians, who would say that they would not vote for their particular resolution when it is sought.
3.30 p.m.

I am saying, Sir, if there is any person in this Parliament today who do not feel that the Police Force needs to have an increase in salary. I am asking that person to get up on a point of order and rule me out and tell the Parliament that I am misleading the House by giving the impression that the police need an increase in salary.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has the full support of the Opposition and I am sure that he has the full support of the Deputy Prime Minister on this particular issue.

The Deputy Prime Minister understands quite well the importance of having a good Police Force because she understands the relation with good security as it relates to tourism and the economy.

The Attorney-General quite understands the message from the Chief Executive Officer of Sandy Lane of the importance of correcting certain ills within the society and the Attorney-General understands quite well that in order to correct those ills, he has to make sure that the necessary package is provided for the Police Force.

We need not to play around this issue. Everyone in Barbados understands that we need the police force more so now than ever and everybody understands now, Sir, there is a good working relationship between the Police Force and the Defence Force. The public is now saying around the street corners that a lot of the people working in the Defence Force could well change their uniforms and help the policemen do the job that they are helping them do now.

Sir, I am certain that if I were to leave here and go to my constituency, I will not see a police van first. The first thing I will see is a Defence Force van, three Defence Force soldiers in the van and one policeman. When I see the Police van, I will see policemen in that van. There is a possibility I will see another force where you have the Defence Force soldiers alone driving around. So when the Attorney-General wants to make sport at my speech about the Royal Barbados Police Force, it is the best Police Force in Barbados. He must understand that whenever he sees me slicking off my pads, leave the ball because the speed that it is travelling at, if you put your hand, it will burn you and you have been burnt.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It might sound foolish to you but it is loaded with sense. Always remember that. Every time I make a statement, Sir, you will not hear the masses reacting like you because they fully understand the basis of my speech.

Mr. Chairman, I say to you, Sir, that we have to recognise that we have to stop pretending that we do not understand some of the problems as they relate to crime. An unhappy man cannot perform well but a happy man has the capacity to do his best. When one is operating under stress, you cannot get full production.

I say to the Honourable Minister responsible for the Police Force, you have full responsibility now. You need not say an order has to go from the Commissioner of Police to the Governor-General, that order is now on your desk, Sir. Relieve the Police Force of their stress and we will help you

solve all the problems as they relate to crime and that must be remembered.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am saying that if you allow the policemen their fair due and you remove that unnecessary stress, you will also remove the unnecessary stress from all the lives of Barbadians. I beg you, Sir, to recognise the point I am making because it is clear to me that somehow you do not seem to understand the point but I do not only want you to understand the point, I want you to take the necessary measures to correct the problem and we will solve the problem for you.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman,.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, in winding up Head 13, let me just assure the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that I have heard the plea. He ought to know, Sir, and perhaps I thought the public of Barbados knew but perhaps I need to repeat, that there are well-established procedures that have been pursued by successive Governments because the structure of our governance has been such that the Ministry of Finance determines the feasibility of a request for finance. The Ministry of the Civil Service determines the feasibility of a request for personnel and terms and conditions of service. So that if ...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of Opposition order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House by trying to give the House the impression, Sir, that he has put forward a package to the Ministry of Finance and it has not been accepted.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Outstanding absurdity, Sir.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will clarify it. All I am saying, Sir, is that where the police make a proposal for let us say, increased wages, or regrading, or re-classification, now fits the amendment to the Bill that the Honourable Member spoke of, which he says gives me a lot of responsibility for the police, they will write to my Ministry, put their proposals, then we have to send those proposals, with our recommendations to the Ministry of the Civil Service that will make the first determination. If it is in a collective exercise with other unions then, they would be all involved in that exercise.

Let me give another example. My Ministry is going to be writing the Ministry of the Civil Service very shortly

because we have received certain information that we asked the Commissioner of Police to supply and he has sent it, to get clarifications about the flexi-time and all the categories of officers to whom it will apply.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, they will be getting it but there are certain people who were not mentioned in the correspondence from the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. The protective officers, judges, drivers and so on were not mentioned. Now it is possible...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let me explain that. That did not come from Ministry of Finance, that is a Ministry of the Civil Service matter so we are writing to have clarification of some of these things.

Asides.

3.40 p.m.

The vehicle package was a matter not involving the Ministry of Civil Service at all. That matter went straight to the Ministry of Finance. They were asked if they could do it or not. They were asked, how would they do it, and if they could do it, whether they would do it by suppliers' credit, raise of bonds or how. We went with suppliers' credit.

There are various aspects of the police service that impact on other government departments and one has to be aware of it. Let me just, however, explain. I will do it now and then I would not have to do it when we come to Head 30. The Honourable Member said very cunningly for the Press to run with a headline, because he knows that he can rely on them, the garages would not repair the police vehicles.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: If you all read the supplementary and the addendum, you would see specifically under Head 30 which we are coming to, there is \$359, 050 being sought. I will deal with that now so that I will not have to explain it later when we come to the Head.

In answer to the point raised by the Honourable Member, the new vehicles, the first set of which were delivered on August 04, 2000 and then there was another set which was delivered later on in the year, had schedules for service. We had to pay insurance premiums on them. We had to pay road taxes and so on. When the Estimates were debated last year, those sums were not factored in because we did not know in March last year how many vehicles we were going to get or the running cost and so on.

It is true that a few weeks ago we were, and we still are, short of money and that is why we have come today for the \$359 050 under Head 30. It is untrue to say that any garage or any person refused to repair the vehicles.

Asides.

I know that there were some that were to go to Simpson Motors Limited. I happened to see one of the people from there one night and I spoke to him and told him that we had a couple of vehicles which were in need of some repairs and that we are coming for a supplementary but it would not get to the House before this week and asked him if they would do the service and the repairs and so on, the little bits and pieces that we had to do in the first six months. He said, "sure."

However, Honourable Members must remember that under the financial rules no government department can spend money or incur expenditure when there is no fund voted for it. The fact that we needed to have the repairs done, we could not go like the private sector and organise a deal to repair and pay later because it would be preempting the supremacy of Parliament because this has to come here first.

So under the financial rules, it is very important for people to remember that in public finance – I suppose a Ministry of Finance could give a Letter of Comfort or something like that – a department cannot incur expenditure unless the funds have been voted for in the Parliament of Barbados. That is all that is happening.

As the Honourable Member has said, some of the vehicles just wanted disc pads, brake checks and this tightening and that tightening and tuning and so on. There are just little things to be done to them. In fact, the bill for the repairs to the vehicles, out of this \$359 050 00, is \$52 000. Sir, that is the position. I, therefore, beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

Sir, I beg to move that in the Addendum under Other Personal Emoluments at paragraph 2, Roman numerals II, should read:

"The cost of salaries for the post of Chief Research Officer (S.6) with effect from January 2001."

I am grateful to the Leader of the Opposition for pointing that out. I beg to delete the year '2000' and substitute '2001'.

Subject to that amendment, I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

HEAD 15 – CABINET OFFICE – \$3 775.37

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: This amount is required to meet the additional expenditure for travel consequent upon the 5 per cent increase of travel rates for the personal staff to the Prime Minister and Personal Assistants to Ministers.

This is a consequential thing, Sir, and I beg to move that Head 15 stand part.

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

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS – \$733 990.00

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the first part of this Supplementary deals with the Caribbean Emergency Relief Organisation (CERO) where we are seeking a supplementary provision of \$50 000 under the item Contingencies.

Barbados, in response to international appeals and as a humanitarian gesture for countries which have been afflicted by natural disasters from time to time, does make a contribution. When Hurricane Lenny, I think it was, or the other one, did great damage in Central America two years ago and also the Bangladesh floods and so on we contributed. Barbados is contributing US\$5 000 each to Mozambique and Zimbabwe and US\$1 000 to Belize. 3.50 p.m.

In the meantime, we are seeking a little cushion and we are, therefore, asking for the \$50 000 for CERO which will enable us, as I said, to make an important contribution as a member of the International Community to our brethren in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Belize.

Under Programme 201 – Immigration, Regulatory Services, we are seeking \$44 484 and this is occasioned because of overtime that we have to pay to officers at the Immigration Department. With the increase in tourist traffic where we had an 8 per cent increase in tourism last year, the Immigration Department has been called upon to work beyond the call. In addition to that, we have had to employ persons on piece rate, to key in the information from the ED cards both arrivals and departures, so that departments which rely upon statistical information such as the Central Bank, Tourism Authority and the Caribbean Tourism Organization can have a body of statistical information upon which to make informed decisions and pass judgments.

Sir, we need to prop up this vote for Other Personal Emoluments to have enough money to pay overtime. National Insurance contributions are a consequence, Sir,

because once you pay more money by way of overtime your National Insurance cost will consequentially increase.

We are also seeking \$14 538 to supplement the Utility Vote of the Fire Service and \$16 480 for Government Information Service. At their building in Bay Street, the electrical wiring has been very bad and we are lucky that we have not lost that business because of the electrical wiring. The Government Electrical Engineers had two serious situations last year when the electricity just could not take the load and the equipment was damaged. The Government Electrical Department has requested that there be the installation of a transformer and other remedial electrical work as a matter of urgency. Sir, we are seeking the supplementary to do that necessary work.

Sir, under Programme 243, we are seeking funds and this is the one that the Press have been highlighting, I am told, when I was away. I see something in the Nation today also that suggests across Government that there seems to be a problem or bottleneck that prevents people who are substituting from being paid on time. Before I went away Sunday before last, I had heard from three Prison Officers that they had not been paid. These are temporary people who come in and substitute. They have not been paid since November.

Sir, before I left on that Sunday, I spoke to the Minister responsible for the Civil Service, Parliamentary Secretary, Permanent Secretary and the Prison Superintendent. But it is a problem that comes up every few months and it is not good enough. We have to find a way. I understand that it has to do with Smart Stream. It is not only Smart Stream.

In the case of the Prison, the support secretarial and clerical staff is lacking. This has been lacking ever since 1991 when people were sent home. The Superintendent of Prisons does not have a secretary. Can you imagine that? They brought a clerical officer from another department to deal with the temporary forms and so on. He did not work out and he left. One hundred forms were found in his desk.

On one occasion, I think it would have been November 1999, I happened to be acting as Prime Minister and in my constituency office on a Wednesday afternoon two Prison Officers came to see me to complain that they had not been paid for months. I told them that I would look into it. The next day I was able to put something in place to have the matter accelerated. But there was a bottleneck. Some of the fault was at the Prison and some was at the CPO Department where the forms were held up. They start from the Prison and go to the Ministry, to the CPO, Ministry of the Civil Service and then to the Prime Minister. That five stage process, works great hardship to poor people who are doing valiant service.

Sir, in the case of one prison officer in November 1999, this lady had paid down on either a spot or a house at Rock Hall where the old police station was, but she had not been able to pay for let us say three months. I know that she had not received any money for four months and National Housing was writing and informing her that it would forfeit the money that she had worked so hard to pay down. I had to call National Housing and say to them that it is the Government that is at fault. This lady should not suffer and to give her a little time. But these are the problems that happen to poor people working in the Public Service. If they are not paid on time, you are forcing them into the debt collectors hand and into court.

Therefore, we have to clean up the system. Rid the system of the bureaucracy that has been contributing to the unhappiness of these people. I am pleased, therefore, to tell Honourable Members that the prison officers will be able to get what is owed to them because not only have they been owed, but they were waiting on this supplementary provision. There had been a lot of substitution in the Prison because of a high level of sick leave among prison officers and this \$289 000 will facilitate the payment of those prison officers. Part of the problem at the prison recently has been because we have been waiting on this. I do not wish it to appear that the payment of this will solve the problem.

Sir, I am saying systemically there is a problem and I would not be surprised, unless we deal with that problem that come let us say June or July you hear again that prison officers or other people have not been paid for two or three months. Unless we deal with the system that causes that situation, we are not going anywhere and ever so often we are going to find that people have not been paid not because they had run out of funds, but because in the system itself there are bottlenecks.

Sir, I am going to use my position as a member of Cabinet to urge my colleagues to support me in this. I am going to raise it in Cabinet because we have to deal with it. There has to be another way and we have to reform the Public Service to make sure that when people work they are paid reasonably commensurately with the discharge of their duties.

4.00 p.m.

Sir, the other matters relate to National Insurance contributions, supplies and materials, the maintenance of property, cost of insuring vehicles and equipment for the Prison, as I said, now that we have the new prison vehicles. We did not know the cost of insurance and road tax last year. We now have to appropriate this \$35 000 to pay off those charges.

There is also a small sum being sought for the Probation Department, \$53 336 to pay utilities: telephone, electricity and water.

I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 30 – ATTORNEY GENERAL – \$1 467 085

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, \$765 779 is being sought to pay professional fees in respect of the Judicial Centre. I believe that the Government is determined that as it seeks to modernise Barbados and reposition Barbados to take its place in the global and now liberalised international community it has to modernise its justice system because the justice system contributes, not necessarily in an invisible way but in a real way, to economic development.

For a long time we have recognised the need to build a new Judicial Centre, Supreme Court, if you like, and Government is determined that this year work on a new judicial centre will start. We are seeking to deal with it off budget and we have had two proposals to raise financing, one from a bank in Barbados and one from a consortium, which I believe has headquarters in Trinidad but has relations with George Wimpey and Company, construction magnates of England. The Ministry of Finance has been sent those proposals. Government may end up floating its own bond but financing is being looked at to be put in place this year to allow construction to start about September, no later than October this year.

The site has been identified and an agreement on the price has been reached from the CLICO Group of companies to purchase the old Foundry site for \$16.7 million. The design work has been completed and two Fridays ago the Planning and Priorities Committee had a presentation from the architects on the designs for the Supreme Court. It will be a very imposing building and one befitting Barbados in the twenty-first century.

Sometime next week, Sir, if we could get a minute together, I would brief the Leader of the Opposition. Just in case I do not get to it... The Bar and the judges have seen the plans. Those have been all refined with inputs from the necessary users of the building.

We hold some funds for the consultants who have done a tremendous job on this and I wish to pay tribute to them, not only the architects but the engineers and quantity surveyors. This money is to pay outstanding sums. The electrical consultant – \$152 459; CEP, civil engineers – \$139 905; Gillespie and Steele, the architects – \$347 821 and Ferdinand Associates, quantity surveyors – \$125 591. They have held strain for a long time, Sir, done the work and we really owe them. That is the first part of this. Sir.

The second part relates to utilities in respect of the police and the third part is maintenance of property. I already indicated to Honourable Members that this is to pay insurance premiums, purchase petrol and maintain the police vehicles to the end of this fiscal year, especially having regard to the increased number of vehicles from the special package.

I beg to move, Sir, that Head 30 stand part.

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

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I beg to move that Schedule II stand part.

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

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the DEPUTY SPEAKER, the passing of one Money Resolution with one amendment in Committee of Supply and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Resolution was read a first and second time and passed.

4.10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this concludes Government Business for the day.

Sir, next week we will begin the long, tiring exercise of debating the Appropriation Bill. I beg to move that this Honourable House be adjourned until Monday, March 12, 2001 at 10 o'clock in the morning.

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

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, March 12, 2001 at 10 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

4.15 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 1

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, February 27, 2001.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR
THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr. Deputy Speaker announced that he had received Accounts and Statements for September, 2000 prepared by the Accountant General.

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons laid the following papers on behalf of the Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur.

5. The Chairman's Report of the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Limited for the Year ended June 30, 2000.
6. Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Limited (Parent Company only) for the Year ended June 30, 2000.
7. Reports of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarters ended September 30, 2000 and December 31, 2000.
8. Annual Report of the National Productivity Council for the Fiscal Year ended September 30, 1999.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

The Agricultural Development Fund Bill, 2001.

MOTIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

He informed the Sitting that Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur would not be attending the Sitting as he was at that time attending a meeting of the Council of the Caribbean Development Bank and would later in the day be attending a World Bank meeting.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

Notice was given that the following were ready:

Replies to Parliamentary Question Nos. 23 and 32 asked by Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, Member for St. John.

SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN STANDING
ORDERS**Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS** 2

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – BILL ENTITLED AN ACT TO
A M E N D T H E E M P L O Y M E N T
(MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT TO
ALTER THE DEFINITIONS OF “CHILD”
AND “YOUNG PERSON” 2

Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 2, 16; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 5; Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 8; Hon. R. R. Farley, 8; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 11; Hon. R. C. Eastmond, 13.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair

COMMITTEE

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE 17

PAPERS (Recommitted)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 18

The Barbados Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2001-2002 and Schedules of Personal Emoluments 2001-2002.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 18

The Appropriation Bill, 2001.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 18

The Appropriation Bill, 2001.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Resumed)

COMMITTEE

ORDER NO. 9 – RESOLUTION THAT THE SUM OF THREE MILLION, THREE HUNDRED AND NINETEEN THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FOUR DOLLARS BE GRANTED FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND BE PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2000-2001 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 9, 2001 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THIS RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 30 BE AMENDED AS SHOWN IN SCHEDULE II. . . 18

HEAD 13 – PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE 18

Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 19; Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 18; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 22.

HEAD 15 – CABINET OFFICE – \$3 775.37 26

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 26.

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

– \$733 990 26

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 26.

HEAD 30 – ATTORNEY GENERAL – \$1 467 085 . . 27

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 27.

SUSPENSION 16

ADJOURNMENT 28

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 28.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

EASTMOND, Hon. R. C. (St. James North)

FARLEY, Hon. R. R. (Christ Church East)

GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St. Philip North)

KELLMAN, Hon. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)

SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. Thomas)

THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)