
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Wednesday, March 21, 2001.

PRESENT

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.M.
(Cantab.)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs) (Minister of the Civil Service)

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

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

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B.

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

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (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)

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

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B.

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. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)

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

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

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

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

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of Monday, March 12, 2001.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Monday, March 12, 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 those Minutes stand confirmed.

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay Curriculum 2000 – Rationale and Guidelines for Curriculum Reform.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Report of the National Conservation Commission for the period April 1997 to March 1998.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am to advise that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 36 asked by the Honourable Member for St. John is ready.

Sir, on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and I am also to advise that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 38 asked by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is also ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy 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, Sir.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 9 – COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO
CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF
MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF
BARBADOS – \$50 394 219

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 the Bill, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

COMMITTEE

HEAD 24 – MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATION –
\$71 787

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Social Transformation is making a straightforward Supplementary which is to facilitate the Ministry's payment of salaries, wages and National Insurance in the amount \$9 116. Sir, out of that are Personal Emoluments in the amount of \$8 770 while the National insurance is \$346.

Sir, the Poverty Alleviation Bureau is requesting an additional \$62 617 for this Supplementary. Out of that, \$26 217 is to cover the payment of seven officers at the Bureau which includes a Social Investigator Coordination, a Research Analyst, a Consultant, a Secretary, a Field Investigator and a Maid. Sir, wages \$2000; rent the St. Carolines Complex, The Pine, \$4 600; plant, equipment and furniture \$ 6 600; utility bills \$2 000; supplies and for materials \$2 000 and payment of gratuity fees of \$19 200.

Sir, as you know the Poverty Alleviation Bureau is a Unit under the Ministry of Transformation which has been designated the role of dealing with poverty eradication in Barbados and the developing methodologies and strategies to deal with this problem in Barbados.

Sir, this request is a shortfall in terms of management cost. I am asking that this Honourable Chamber grant us the requested sum to further carry out the necessary work that we are currently doing. Sir, I ask that Head 24 do stand part.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would support this particular request under Head 24. I will also like to suggest that this department must also take into consideration that the increase in fuel it cost is going to impact negatively on those people who are receiving welfare grants and payments from the Ministry of Social Transformation. I would hope that the Minister would put forward a case to recognise that the recipients from his Ministry will be impacted on negatively and they need to have the necessary changes to reflect how the cost of living has been impacting on them.

Mr. Chairman, we must recognise that even though this Ministry is responsible for distributing what we call welfare grants, that whatever is occurring within the society must not be seen as a cost by these persons. Sir, it is not their fault that they find themselves in this situation. What is also regrettable, Sir, is at a time when we appear to be bragging of having the lowest level of unemployment, the demand on this particular Ministry is increasing. Sir, one wonders whether the demands are false or the unemployment statistics are false. If one passes close to this Ministry on any given day and see the number of people who are requesting help from Government, one cannot understand how you can have such a low unemployment situation and the requests from this Ministry are go great.

I hope, Sir, that some of the experts at Cave Hill will be able to tell me why we have such a so-called low unemployment rate and a great demand for Government services because I cannot get the two added. On top of that there is also a large number of people who cannot make such a request and when you tabulate the two, Sir, something has to be wrong.

There was a call this week by a person who is of the view that the way that the Statistical Department is

tabulating their figures be changed. I support that, Sir, because it is clear to me that when one tells me that the total number of people that are looking for work remains constant and at the same time the total number of people employed in this country is increasing, without acknowledging that when a tabulation is done at a work site, it adds those persons who maybe working on a short-term basis. If you are going to add those to your statistics, you will also need to change your base.

I am aware that the base has not been changed, so I question Government before they give the wrong impression to the public and create additional pressure for the Minister of Social Transformation, that they look at the way in which they are tabulating the unemployment statistics because there are not the correct figures.

I thank you very much, Sir.
11.30 a.m.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for his intervention but I want to assure the Honourable Member that the Ministry of Social Transformation is currently in the process of making an assessment to see how our strategy has been working and what is the impact of our strategy on the entire country.

In fact that assessment document is currently within the Ministry and it is being done with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). I am also cognizant of the fact that the increase in the cost of fuel will have some impact on these categories of workers, particularly that category of worker that is now defined as the working poor. Although the demand on the Ministry is tremendous I want to assure everyone that we, in the Ministry of Social Transformation, are cognizant of this and we are doing a new intervention. We are taking a new approach so that we can deal with the number of social problems.

Against that background, Sir, I just want to ask that Head No. 24 stand part.

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

HEAD NO. 28 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS IN
THE AMOUNT OF NINE HUNDRED AND
THIRTY THREE THOUSAND, NINE
HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINE
DOLLARS (\$933 969)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, today the Government is seeking to tidy up its accounts before the 31st March, 2001 and the several supplementaries on the Order Paper today are designed to allow Government to pay certain debts or to make provision for money to ensure that bills are paid by the 31st March, 2001.

You will recall, Sir, that last Monday when the Prime Minister began his Second Reading speech, he explained that he was desirous this year of settling as many arrears as possible to clean up the accounts up to the end of Government's financial year rather than carry substantial arrears into the new financial year and it is with a view to fulfilling that pledge that this Resolution has come today and is required for the Ministry of Home Affairs in respect of the public centre being constructed at The Glebe, St. George.

Now, Sir, let me give the Honourable House the background. An amount of \$1.7 million was provided under Structures for completion of the public centre at The Glebe, St. George. That amount has been utilized or committed and there is an outstanding amount which we are seeking to pay because the contractor and sub-contractors need to be paid in respect of that project, which is very near completion.

The sum of \$933 969 is, therefore, required to pay the contractor and certain sub-contractors who are owed funds so that the work on this project can shortly be completed. The project consists of a new post office, a new community centre, a new police outpost...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am being told that an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) will be at the post office...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, we are seeking the funds to pay the contractor and sub-contractors, so that is really the essence of this supplementary.

I, therefore, beg to move that Head No. 28 in the sum of \$933 969 stand part.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I believe this project is one of those projects that is a pilot for what the Government has described last week in the Estimates as the provision of new public centres in Barbados and they have identified a number of areas in which such public centres will be constructed under the Ministry of Home Affairs. This is the first of them and, obviously, there is a lot to be learned with the effect of this particular supplementary.

We first see that the project is two years overdue, with no indication of a completion date. Now that cannot be good governance, not the effective management of a public project of this nature. The cost overrun is, at least, 50 per

cent over the original contract price. It was originally estimated to cost \$3.2 million and it is not a big building with major structural components.

I pass the project all the time. I presume because I am interested in knowing whether the principal of the company that had been given the contract, who is a former Cabinet Minister in the Barbados Labour Party, has been able, in recent times, to improve on his construction skills.
11.40 a.m.

Therefore, a project like this needs to have greater scrutiny because it is not being undertaken by a traditional builder. The Government puts a project like this in the hands of a novice at construction. This a company that only sprung into existence after the Democratic Labour Party lost the Government in 1994, which has suddenly been awarded millions of dollars in contracts for public works in Barbados despite warnings from several sources including internally – and to a contractor who was involved in infelicities in the Ministry of Agriculture – Markets Division.

The same contractor was paid \$28 000 for work that he has not even started yet much to the embarrassment of the Honourable Member for St. James North. In a cornucopia of corruption in the markets division of the Ministry of Agriculture, officers had to be dismissed or resigned leaving a trail of confusion behind them.

Now, here we have it again, very regrettably, under the Ministry of Home Affairs. I am certain the Minister would probably like not to have to bring something like this to the attention of the House because by and large the projects undertaken by the Ministry of Home Affairs have not suffered the same fate that this one has suffered, and I speak advisingly, or I should put it this way, that the House has not been told that they have suffered the same fate that this one is suffering.

This is a complete embarrassment. We would like to see the people of St. George benefiting from the improved facilities but if this is the way that Government is going to undertake the tendering process, this is the most glaring example of high level political opportunism. Sub-contractors are not being paid. I doubt that the head contractor has not been paid but the sub-contractors have not been paid. I hope that Government could guarantee that when the money is paid to the head contractor that when he finds time from his talk show host duties on Monday mornings that he would confirm to the public, because he speaks on every subject under the sun, that he has put at a disadvantage these small contractors who are sub-contractors on this project.

As I have said, this is just another example following on that trend that we had two years ago with a contractor being paid money for work that was not done. When you look behind the surface, you discover it is a former Cabinet

Minister who should know better. Now he has been given a project costing \$3.256 million to execute in St. George. The project is behind time. There is no fixed date for completion of it. It is in overrun to \$1.4 million. Debt is owed to sub-contractors and it all points to incompetence.

Therefore, I hope that the Government has a very adequate explanation and that at the end of the day we do not hear in here, which is a continual complaint, that it is the fault of some public officer because I know, and the rest of Barbados would know, that behind the criticisms of the public officers by this Government you can always find a trail directly into the office of the Minister who is usually very influential in ensuring, that as the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central said, that the work is spread around. This is another example of work being spread around and being put into the hands of the wrong people, as I said, bordering on an infelicity.

I hope that the Auditor General can give this project a clean bill of health at the end of the day because it is disgusting to expect me to support this kind of scenario. In fact, I am declaring my position up front because I know when people, as I said, get on the call-in programmes every Monday morning and try to pretend that they have gone through some kind of conversion, unless somebody can confirm to me that all of the necessary controls are in place to monitor, supervise and execute this project to the highest standards of probity and public accountability, I would not be able to support this supplementary.

As I said, it is very unfortunate because it is not the kind of supplementary one would normally associate with the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. This is one on which he has obviously has not had a grip. Based on the record, as I said, of this contractor, I have great, grave concerns and reluctance to give my support to this supplementary.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, to my mind, this complex at the Valley, St. George is indeed a solid undertaking. I believe that the building is very sound. I have toured the building several times and I must say that this building is looking good. I believe it should be completed within the very near future – within a month or so. All the infrastructural works are completed. It is just a matter of the guard wall and a few other minor electrical things which are supposed to be done.

Mr. Chairman, one has to understand that in contracts of this nature the tendering process must be completed. I am sure that the tendering process was completed as far as this building is concerned.

Now, there were some problems from the initial stages. I just want to say that this complex was envisaged years ago by the Manifestos of the Barbados Labour Party way back in the 1976 when the former Prime Minister, the Right

Honourable Errol Walton Barrow, talked about the tales of two cities. The entire Glebe area is being developed as a town centre and this complex is one of two ...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. George North has just delivered himself of some words that he needs to clarify if not we would have to make the accusation that he is misleading the House. Now, according to the Addendum to this Resolution, I refer you to Head 28, it said:

“As at October 31, 2000 the entire provision was utilised and/or committed as expenditure on the project.”

What the Honourable Member is trying to make the House believe is that it cost \$933 000 which is just short of the \$1 million to build a guard wall, do some electrical and some minor things. This is a quarter of the total project cost.

Now, the Honourable Member either has to withdraw those remarks and let the record reflect that it is incorrect, unless he is building a \$1 million guard wall in St. George, and indicate that he is misleading the House or the debate cannot proceed on this basis because we want a level of accountability on this project. I cannot imagine that anybody can argue that it could be minor things and that a guard wall can cost \$933 000.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I am not saying that the guard wall would cost \$1 million. I am saying that all the infrastructural work has been completed. The only thing left to be done now in terms of infrastructure would be the guard wall around the structure. Certainly, there must be bills that have come into the AG's office that have to be paid. The Attorney General will explain that when he gets a chance. 11.50 a.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said from the outset that the funds are being requested, not in respect of work that has already been committed, because that would be a breach of the law. Those funds ran out since October 31, 2000. Any work that has been done since then that did not fall within the original provision would be undertaken illegally, and I want to know if the Honourable Member for St. George North is telling this House that, despite the fact that the money ran out, this same contractor has once again proceeded to undertake work without authorisation or that the Ministry permitted him to proceed to undertake work on this project without authorisation.

We are talking about \$1 million in work. The Addendum says that the provision expired, in other words, the amount that had been provided on October 31, 2000. So we need to be clear. If we are breaking the rules we are not supporting it. The Honourable Member has given the

impression that the rules are being broken on that project or that a guard wall and some electricals can cost \$1 million. Something is wrong here and we need a full explanation of it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member withdraw the original remarks and allow the presenter to be more specific in relation to the other problem we have, whether the wall cost \$1 million or otherwise? I would ask that the presenter clarify all these little misunderstandings.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: The only point I have said is that as far as the onlooker can see. As far as I see...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member is misleading the House because he never said that. The only person in this debate who said he looked at the project is I. I looked at it because I did not think that the contractor should have got the contract in the first place because he is not a builder. The Honourable Member for St. George North said quite clearly that all the infrastructural work has been completed and that this money is required for minor things and a guard wall. I made a note on a piece of paper, Sir. The Honourable Member needs to withdraw that so that the debate can proceed on the basis of integrity or we are going to have problems in here today.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I want to clarify what I was saying. I never said that this money is to repair or fix a guard wall. I am saying that as far as I see all the structural work has been completed at the Glebe or the Valley and that it is only the electrical work to be completed and a guard wall. Also there are a number of small things to be done at the Glebe but the major things would be...

Aside.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: ... I do not know. The point that I want to make is that this complex, as the Honourable Member for St. John has said, would be a trend in which Government wants to have these complexes built across the country and the Attorney-General's Office has been looking at these complexes, not only in St. George but also in St. Joseph, so that I believe, Mr. Chairman, that when this complex is completed we will have the community centre which the Member for St. Michael South East and I have visited. We are hoping that the new centre could accommodate the technology which the Prime Minister mentioned during the Estimates so that we could have the computers in the centre.

It is also important to note too that in this centre we will have an ATM machine which the Barbados National Bank has put in, and this will be functional as well. We understand that it should be ready when the complex is opened.

Mr. Chairman, I support the request for further expenditure and one has to understand that at this complex

there were foundation problems. I support this venture and believe that the money is well spent at the Valley.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on this Head to say to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas that after being in here over six years one must learn from the debating skills of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. He has always been able to use Hansard to its fullest and he has a very good memory.

Earlier on in another supplementary some time back when we were dealing with the repairing of the police vehicles the Honourable Member for St. Thomas reminded the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that no garage has a right to carry out work unless money has been voted for that work. It is rather interesting to listen to this debate and to hear from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas that the Prime Minister has given a mandate that he wants to pay all of the bills this year and that he does not want any bills going over. He said that, and it was repeated by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas which gives the impression, Sir, that it is quite possible that the Government could have been carrying over bills in previous years and we were not knowing the true deficit.

It goes back to a point that I have been making to this house that we need in this House to look at the system of accounting that we are using. It might be better to look at the accrual system because that is the only system that can truly tell us the total expenditure incurred by a government in any particular year because what it means is that on March 31st a government can easily look to see the amount of money available to it and decide the level of supplementaries that can come before the House.

When one looks at the period between January and now and one sees the level and I mean the total amount of supplementaries brought before this House, one must ask oneself what new revenue measures were put in place to accumulate the money that Government would now have available to it to incur these large sums of supplementaries.

A good tabulation would tell you that the Government has been able to come for nearly \$100 million in supplementaries. It means that either they were rather conservative on their revenues which is really a good accounting practice or, and I want to give them the benefit of the doubt, that they were conservative in their revenues or they were rather reckless in underestimating their expenditure. A good accounting practice would always tell you that it is always good to overstate your expenditure and probably understate your revenue.

I need to find out from this House, Sir, which one has occurred. You know, Mr. Chairman, that one can only come to the conclusion.
12.00 noon.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you keep referring to me as Mr. Speaker. I am not Mr. Speaker. I am Mr. Chairman.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, you know that I always have good hopes for you but I meant, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, we have a situation where it could be, as was said prior to the Budget in October, that the Government has been doing rather well because of the bound rates. I would like to believe that the Government has been able to collect a lot more revenue than they had planned from the bound rates with ten days to go before the end of the year they can call all the Ministries and tell them that instead of keeping bills in their drawers they can now present them into a supplementary because they have some additional cash they did not foresee.

Mr. Chairman, this particular measure has shown this House that we are now at a stage where the system used previously which we thought was so good, that we need to look at that system and look at what was said in this House on many occasions by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

This particular supplementary has shown me that if we do not do those things, we can come here every year and make a prediction that the deficit will be \$400 million when, in truth and in fact, we know quite well it could be much higher or much lower.

Sir, we need a situation in this country where we can get a little closer than this because \$100 million on total expenditure of \$2.1 billion is a 5% error and that is too great, Sir.

I am saying that we need to get a little tighter than this but it allows, as we have seen in some Ministries, for some officers to misuse the system and we need not have this type of relationship.

Sir, I hope that what I said will not fall on deaf ears and that it will be taken in the light that it was said. Those not capable of understanding what I am saying, I am quite prepared to take them behind the Chair and educate them on this particular matter.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to add my voice in support of the Resolution before the Chamber. I thought to myself during the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. George North that whatever shortcomings might have been perceived to be attached to that presentation by the Honourable Member for St. John. Those shortcomings may have been derived out of an abundance of excitement over the fact that such development continues to reflect itself in the constituency of St. George North.

I think that the Minister of Home Affairs ought to be commended even though the other Side might have some concerns with reference to this project. Some focus was made on the matter of a completion date and whereas one ought to be concerned that Government projects are completed in a timely fashion because there is always a cost associated with overruns on time and one might validly be concerned, I think a moment perhaps could have been spared to offer some commendation with reference to the fact that the concept is a good one and one which ought to be lauded.

The demographics associated with St. George now suggest that this project is suitably located. When one considers the services which are to be provided through this facility then one understands the thinking and planning associated with this project. There are now large build-ups of new residential areas, particularly in St. George North. I do not think it is in dispute that much has happened in recent years with reference to housing development in St. George North and so the demographics suggest that this facility is very suitably located.

The matter of providing better access to postal services is extremely important especially in an era when the post office, as we have traditionally known it, is departing from that traditional and getting into the business of offering new and additional services. It would be of critical importance that the newly built-up areas in St. George North would have access to the total postal services which are being offered by the Barbados Postal Service to that area.

Of course, there is the matter of police presence and again, the demographics would suggest that it is a step in the right direction to establish a police presence in strong terms in this particular location.

The trend with criminal activity also suggest the advisability of having a police presence located at the Valley in St. George.

Mr. Chairman, banking services are becoming more and more accessible to Barbadians through new services being offered by the banking sector and again, it is quite in place to have automatic teller machine service located in these new residential areas.

The overruns on cost were also raised by the Honourable Member for St. John. I cannot speak with any authority about the particular contractor in this case with reference to any history of works. I do not have any knowledge of that to the extent that the Honourable Member for St. John seems to have but I would say, in a general way that I am concerned, from my limited experience in Government over the quality of work which is done by some contractors for works large and small.

I can speak with reference to small projects because these are the things which impact on my constituency more

so than the bigger projects. One can walk across St. Michael West and one is too often confronted with situations where the work done by those who have been embraced by Government and those who have been the beneficiaries of some of Government spending, the quality of work has been shoddy and poor. I think that there is a cause for concern.

It is alright to talk about ensuring that the small man and small contractor has access to work opportunities and benefits from Government's capital programme or the socio-economic spending programme but then the quality of work is very much in question. Many of these smaller tasks remain unfinished and I can point you to a few housing situations across St. Michael West where the work, after many months, is still unfinished and people have been paid.

The question of wastage and lost of material on Government's project sites, is an issue that also raises concern. I feel pretty assured that the proper tendering process was followed in the particular case and that a decision made for the award of this contract would have been made on the basis of sound judgement and is not the expression of an irresponsible attempt to offer political patronage to someone because of some affiliation to a political entity. I do not believe that nor I do not accept that and, therefore, do not support that. I think that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy should have been loud in his commendation of the Minister for this project as only in recent times, I heard him with loud voice speak with reference to the need for continuing rural development. Sir, this is certainly a case of rural development and we should not criticise the project, we ought to be commending the project. We are talking about a rural development that should be lauded, whether it is recreational facilities such as embraced with the policy of establishing sporting arenas across the country, or mini stadia as they are called, whether it is the question of the establishment of polyclinics across Barbados in the rural areas or whether it is the question of a project such as this. We are talking about rural development and that ought to be lauded.

12.10 p.m.

I believe that similar development should be looked at with reference to places like St. Philip. As a matter of fact, I have heard the Honourable Member for Home Affairs lament the fact that an opportunity was lost by Government, perhaps, over the possibility of acquiring the Six Roads site for the development of such a multi-purpose community complex. Again, the demographic trends at St. Philip; again, the crime pattern with reference to St. Philip suggests that a place like Six Roads would have offered tremendous opportunity for the siting of a multi-purpose facility to serve these types of purposes.

I believe that these are the kinds of projects which are worthwhile and ought to be pursued. We are aware that there is a similar undertaking which is in view for

Horse Hill, St. Joseph and I would want to commend the Minister in that regard and to offer my voice in support of the Resolution with these brief remarks.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the Honourable Members who spoke. The Leader of the Opposition has two legitimate concerns which will be answered. Sir, one that there is an overrun on this project and that it has not been completed on time. Before I answer them, let us understand the context in which this development has taken place.

Honourable Members will recall that during the period 1994 to 1999, I had expressed the view, several times, that Government as a matter of policy should replicate the Hometown project where you have a number of public facilities in one complex.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We have identified St. George as a location for a public centre. We already have the polyclinic a little farther up the road and there is no need to build a health facility. Honourable Members will recall the complaints of workers and the unions about the existing St. George Post Office which is a little cubby-hole, overcrowded, next to the road, no parking and not suitable for the late 20th Century and the 21st Century.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: ... We have decided to one at St. George and Horse Hill, St. Joseph. Honourable Members would see money voted in the coming Estimates for a public centre complex at Tamarind Hall, St. Joseph, which could even be more expansive and indeed expensive than this project. The Tamarind Hall project is going to PPC at the next meeting which I think is next week Friday where we will have presentation of what has been drawn.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We are building a new police station and a library at Cane Garden, St. Thomas where land has been acquired to bring the District "D" Police Station from Holders Hill back to St. Thomas.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, the one that really disappointed me was Six Cross Roads. In 1996, we took all of the Heads of the various departments of the two Ministries to look at the Plantations Complex at Six Roads and that complex could have provided facilities for everything we needed including the fire service. There is a building at the

back of the complex. We tried it with a fire tender and it was an ideal garage for the fire tender. The fire tender went in with ample space to spare. We could have had a new post office; a new magistrate's court; a police station; a library and a fire station in that complex and we could have had this complex for \$6.8 million. The private sector has come in and we have lost it.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, that would have been ideal and we would have had all of those services located at Six Roads.

Sir, at the Glebe, St. George, the site of this project, Honourable Members will recall the history of this. We had designs, originally, to use the school which was on the site and build around it. One night when we were leaving here we heard that the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MTW) had gone and bulldozed the building, so we had to start from scratch and we now had to develop new plans for an area that was razed.

12.20 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no, that was MTW that went and bulldozed that building.

The firm that developed the plan – I cannot remember the name, it is headed by a Mr. George Reifer – they designed the project and made certain assumptions that because there had been an existing building on the site near the road, which was the former Girls' school, that the foundations were good and consistent right through the land.

Now, the land starts flat and then slopes down into a gully behind it at the Southern end. When this project got underway, the first part of the ground nearest the road had good rocks. All of a sudden, as you went towards the South, there had massive foundation problems because the land dipped down, the rocks ceased being consistent and – it was not as bad as at Warrens – but we had a great drop to deal with. Now, anybody who understands building will know then when there is a situation where there is an inconsistency in the rock you are going to end up spending more money.

There was one saving grace. If Honourable Members had been on the site – the Leader of the Opposition said that he passes there...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no, the site is closed. I invite the Honourable Member to go on the site when next he passes there and let them show you where the Police Station is and you will see that the Police Station is now on

that part of the land where we had to go down very deep, because the rock is inconsistent.

What has happened, however, is...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Riefer's company did not know. What has happened is that we have been able to get in, as it were, the basement now, because a basement has been created in the Police Station. We have been able to get in additional space and will be able to do the interviews with electronic methods to take confessions by audio and video. We also have enough space which will allow for identification of witnesses without having to touch them. In other words, we have enough room where you can put up a two-way mirror, the victim of a crime does not have to come face to face with the suspect but he/she can look through a screen and say yes, it was the second person from the left or right. So we have been able to create enough space for the police to do a number of additional things on that site.

Having that problem caused a substantial amount of the overrun. We had to vary the design. I think the Addendum might itself say that there were variations which were approved. This project is reported on every three months at the Planning and Priorities Committee and we had to report the problems with this project. Let me also say that the project in the police backyard where we built the new officers' lounge had a foundation problem also, because of the nature of the rocks. So that a substantial proportion of the overrun on this project has been associated with the foundation quality at the site and the need, as it were, to build down and up to use the depth created by the lack of rock.

Sir, when that problem with the foundation was encountered the project was delayed. The project was delayed, subject to memory, for at least five months, while we had to redesign because the contractors came across, not a cave, but a great depth of earth without rock. So all of those costs would be attributable to the employer under the building contract and, therefore, Government had been liable for those things.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It could not finish. I am explaining why we had the overrun, Sir. I am explaining that there were variations to the original project which were approved by the Planning and Priorities Committee, which is the Committee that monitors capital projects every three months and my Ministry reports every three months and therefore, extensions of time had to be granted and there were overruns.

Before this project began, it was advertised for public

tender. The Tenders Committee, a Committee of all Public Officers, met and recommended the firm PCC Building Works for the contract.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I can only tell you who awarded it, the Ministry did not award anything. There was no recommendation where the Ministry had to disagree and the matter had to go to Cabinet or anything, the Tenders Committee had made the recommendation. Those are the facts. So far as I am aware, from memory, the firm that was recommended and did the construction was the lowest tender in this regard...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will get the figures for Honourable Members but I was explaining why there were costs overruns.

Now, Sir, certificates were issued by the architects and certificates nos. 13, 14 and 15, to the best of my memory, have not been paid because we were waiting for supplementary provision, we had run out of funds. These funds will enable us to pay certain certificates and the project, from what I have been told in the last couple of weeks can be completed within six weeks. I understand that the sub-contractor has to bring in the external lighting from overseas and the installation of the generator, so there is not much longer to wait before this project is opened, Sir.

So, Mr. Chairman, those are the facts. I have explained why there was the delay and the overrun had nothing to do with the contractor, it had all to do with finding the site not suitable at the southern extremity.
12.30 p.m.

The first part of it by the Post Office was good rock but where the police station is, the rock was at such a great depth that we had to change the design so we had overruns and delays because of the site.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Those are the facts. I must say that all kinds of sub-contractors have been calling about their payments. This certificate should have been paid since November and we really need this supplementary.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, with those remarks I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 30 – ATTORNEY GENERAL –
\$255 433

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, again, this is just catching up on some small matters. Under Forensic Services, we require \$28 342 to pay employees to the end of the financial year. There will be consequential national insurance contributions of \$845 on that.

In respect of the Magistrates Courts, we require \$37 814. I think I owe the House a little explanation of that. Sir, Honourable Members will recall that in March 1999, the Registrar of the Supreme Court transferred internally a number of legal assistants in the Magistrates Courts. The legal assistant who was then attached to the St. Matthews Court absconded the island without handing over the safe and its contents to the Registrar. They had to get the Police and the firm which was the agent for the safe, in the presence of the Registrar and the Senior Accountant, to open the safe. When the safe was opened, it was found that \$98 000 was missing. This included revenue of \$60 697.81 which was due to the Accountant General, witness compensation \$110 and suitors' revenue due in civil suits of \$37 813.47. That was the money in the safe that could not be found.

Now, suitors' monies are funds which are paid into the civil office by defendants which are to be paid out to plaintiffs on demand. It could be child money, it could be settlement of a judgment or whatever. The people are now asking for their money. We know that the person who committed the offence is not in Barbados. The funds have never been recovered but since the funds were in the custody of the Crown, when the people come now and ask for their money we must pay it. So this \$37 000 is being sought to compensate persons whose monies were stolen in 1999, by a dishonest Magistrates Court officer. The Crown has to accept liability for it.

Under programme 244 sub-programme 255, Police Services, this is to pay allowances of \$118 432 that are due. There is a sum of \$80 000 to pay for a senior command course for an officer at Bramshill. The course runs from April to September. He has to leave next week, I think it is on the 29th. Those are the purposes for which these sums are required.

I beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on Head 30 I would like to ask the Attorney-General now that he is the Minister responsible for the Police to have a second look at those allowances which are given to the Police because the Police Association came out and spoke about the new

allowances were all in praise for them and now that they are being implemented and the impact is being felt they are not impacting on those whose thought they would have been able to feel the impact of them.

There are a lot of policemen who rightfully thought that they were getting something who are now realising that they are not and it is causing a lot of concern within the police force. Considering what is going on in society today this is a force that we would not like to see unhappy for a long period of time. I am saying to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas that he must recognise that they might have been a misunderstanding by the President of the Police Association because his interpretation and the interpretation of the general membership is quite different. It is good sometimes to please the other members and not only the President.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I have heard the concerns of the Honourable Member. He will recall, when we were debating, I think it was the Complaints Authority Bill, that I indicated then that I had become aware that there were certain concerns about the interpretation of the letter from the Ministry of the Civil Service to the Commissioner of Police, I think it came to the Permanent Secretary and was copied to the Commissioner of Police, setting out the details of the flexing allowance.

I indicated too that I had raised, with the Permanent Secretary of the Civil Service, my own concern that the way the letter was worded, it did not make specific reference to protection officers. There was a view which was expressed orally to me by the Commissioner of Police that protection officers have always been treated as detectives. I spoke to the Commissioner about this and he has provided a note for my Ministry which we are following up with the Ministry of the Civil Service to have the original letter speaking to the allowances clarified. We did not want to do too much while the President of the Association was away in Australia, but we are writing from my Ministry for clarification. As I understand the broad principle, the payment of these allowances will be the overall responsibility of the Commissioner who will delegate to the various divisional heads and they will organise the shifts and detail men in such a way that everybody can benefit from it.
12.40 p.m.

As I said, there were one or two things in the language of the original letter which needed to be clarified and the Ministry is taking that up on behalf of the officers. I beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that.

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

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE –
\$36 365 938

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, under the Ministry of Education the biggest chunk of this supplementary is \$30 million for the University of the West Indies. We are seeking to meet the arrears of the Government's contribution to the UWI and to cover a shortfall for the current year. Shortfalls in contributions have been an issue over the years and successive governments have had to resolve these by supplementaries from time to time. I do not know if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy's proposal for accounting at the accrual basis will deal with this.

The Honourable Member for St. John will know that ever so often we have come to cover the debt due to the University. Part of the problem I understand is due to the overlapping of financial years. The Government's fiscal year is April to March but the UWI's academic year is August to July and it seems that we are always playing catchup because of the overlap in fiscal years. The full extent of Barbados' contribution is not generally known until after students have registered and those registrations are completed some time, I believe, in September/October in a year.

Another contributory factor to the arrears is that there were increases in salaries and wages for staff. Those increases are payable retroactively and carry high interest rates. Originally, the arrears attracted interest rates that were applicable to a campus territory to which the arrears were owed. You see, the problem is that between different territories you have different interest rates. In Jamaica it was as high as 61 per cent. Usually they lend there at 54 per cent.

I understand that this policy was reviewed recently and it was agreed that the lowest interest rate at which the University could borrow funds in the three territories would be used and in Barbados the rate is nine per cent and this, when applied to the outstanding balance, reduced the interest payable from \$3.4 million to \$800 000.

Let me give Honourable Members the outstanding amounts that are payable to UWI:

For the year 1998-1999, contributions were \$8 709 939 that included arrears for salaries. Interest was \$127 126 and the total was \$8 837 065.

For the year 1999-2000, the contribution was \$7 130 563. Interest was \$688 369 for a total of \$7 818 932.

For the current fiscal year 2000-2001, the contribution was \$1 777 029. The interest was \$8 256 for a total of \$1 785 285.

In addition to those arrears, an amount of \$11.6 million is required to meet this year's shortfall. Honourable Members will remember that we voted \$43 million previously but the contributions payable are \$54 592 451, giving a difference of \$11 592 451. Sir, I am also advised that the UWI has agreed to provide a best estimate of cost on a financial year basis by December 31 each year. Government has made it clear that we are prepared to shoulder the responsibility of ensuring that as many Barbadians as possible get the opportunity of tertiary education as cheaply as possible with the Government contributing significantly to the subsidisation of tertiary education in Barbados.

In the context of the Budget, Sir, \$30 million in arrears looks like a lot but for the education of the people of Barbados, particularly our future and our human resources, we can spare no pains and we must not count the cost of educating our human resources. I think that this money is due and Government is prepared to pay so that tertiary education could be as free as possible.

I beg to move, Sir, that Head 34 stand part.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on Head 34 and to make a couple observations. It is clear to me that even though Barbados has been trying to pay its share of contributions because there are some member countries which are not paying on time that we in Barbados are finding ourselves in a situation where we obtain money that is not our true cost.
12.50 p.m.

I would like to ask the Government to recognise that we in Barbados cannot continue to carry the cost of other territories and a command should go from this Parliament that the University would have to find some formula to enable them to calculate the amount of money owed by a particular territory and the territory will be responsible for that amount. Sir, we cannot continue using taxpayers' money to subsidise the cost of other nations. I do not think it is fair to do this.

Sir, I recognise that an amount was owed between 1998 and 1999 of \$8 837 065 and even though the principal was \$8.7 million the interest was only \$127 000. In the year 1999 to 2000 the principal was much smaller, \$7.1 million but the interest was \$688 000. I think this House needs an explanation. How can an amount be owed one year after and the interest is seven times the amount even though the principal is smaller than the year before.

It is clear that this House and the Ministry of Finance seem to be accepting figures from the University of

the West Indies without some of the officers in the Ministry of Finance questioning these figures. I am not saying that I am right but when one looks at this at first glance, one can easily recognise that you cannot have a greater principal and a smaller interest and a smaller principal and a higher interest. I think this House deserves an explanation on this particular matter.

Sir, also relating to these arrears, I remember when I first came to this Assembly this House was given a commitment that these things would not occur. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would remember that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East at the time was very harsh on the Democratic Labour Party for bringing this level of arrears to Parliament.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not quarrelling with the Government for bringing these arrears because I can better understand what is occurring now but the Government must understand that they need to apologise to the Democratic Labour Party for some unfair lashes that were given to the party.

We also need to speak to the University because one expects the University of the West Indies to be a little more efficient than any other organisation. We hope that the University would understand the importance of these figures to the Parliament of Barbados and that we cannot prepare Estimates which do not truly reflect the total sum owed by the people of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 34 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 34 – AMENDMENT TO THE EXPLANATORY NOTE

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that the amendment as circulated to the explanatory note be the amendment.

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

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

HEAD 37 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT – \$7 900 000

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, Ministry of Public Works and Transport under Head 37 is seeking a supplementary in the sum of \$7.9 million. This is as a result of the indebtedness of the Transport Board to the National Insurance Board of principal and interest as at January 15, 2001.

The Transport Board is not in a position to meet this obligation and this Honourable House is being asked to vote these sums to the financing of the issuance of Treasury Bills to the National Insurance Board. The Barbados Transport Board is presently identifying revenue enhancement and cost control measures in order to bring some measure of respectability to the finances.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 37 stand part.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on this particular Head and to make an observation. When one takes this \$7.9 million and add it to the \$8.4 million that was previously given to this Ministry, one will recognise that the Transport Board from the year 2000 to 2001 would have been given a total of \$16 324 987 but when one looks at the current Estimates one will recognise that the subsidy is now \$5 million.

I would like to find out from the Minister how overnight the Transport would have done so well that it would have encouraged the Ministry of Finance to reduce the subsidy to the Transport Board by \$11 324 987. Sir, I would also like to know why the supplementary before this House for the Transport Board is \$7.9 million and not \$7.4 million. I would like the Minister of Public Works and Transport to explain those figures for me.

I thank you.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am still seeking to find out from the Minister of Transport what section of the Transport Board Act would give a Minister of Transport the authority to vary the decision of the Board in respect of contracts which the Board grants for any service and to vary the decision of the Tenders Committee of that Board. I only want to know the section of the Act because once I have that information I can then proceed to understand fully.

I would think that the Minister has some obligations under the Act and one of those obligations would be not to push the debt up further. In other words, if you find a statutory corporation with debt as significant as the Transport Board has, I would assume that the obligation of the Minister would be to further reduce that debt and bring it down to manageable proportions.

Mr. Chairman, I am very concerned that the Minister has not taken that responsibility to reduce the indebtedness of the Transport Board in the way the legislation would have contemplated. I believe that a recent decision taken by the Minister may have pushed the overall debt of the Transport Board up by about \$900 000 over two years. The reason why that concerns me is because unlike the project in St. George, which we were talking about earlier where the money feeds into Barbadians, when you push up insurance premiums most of that money goes in reinsurance so you are only spreading the benefit outside of Barbados. This country has to look every year for millions of dollars for remittances to reinsurance. I remember, when I was Minister of Finance, when we were on a tight IMF programme, one of the biggest struggles that we had was to make sure that there was enough money to make large tranches of payments for insurance companies for reinsurance.

1.00 p.m.

Sir, the Minister has been given all the time in the world to explain this to Parliament because, apparently, his colleagues do not know what I am saying. Well, at least they give the impression that they do not know what I am saying. The Honourable Attorney General has not familiarised himself with the law relating to the Transport Board and has actually said that he does not intend to familiarise himself with it.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, tax payers of Barbados want to know that if the Transport Board is providing a vital service it must have a subsidy. It is going to have debt. On this Side, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has made it clear that we are in favour of a Transport Board providing a service and providing the resources for it. It is not the Minister's money, it is the tax payers money and at the end of the day Ministers must give account for the guardianship and trusteeship which they have in respect of the operations of the statutory boards which come under their control and authority.

If the Minister can point to the section of the Act which gives him all the authority in the world to throw away his money and the Board's money then we would not have anything else to say because we would know that it has been done lawfully and that the Minister would have been acting within the discretion granted to him under the law.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, the Supplementary is in the amount \$7.9 million. Since the Barbados Transport Board has not paid National Insurance contributions to the National Insurance Board since October 14, 1998, the arrears, contributions and levies have amounted to \$7.9 million between that time and this time.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that Head 37 stand part.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am trying to ascertain in respect of the Transport Board's debt to the National Insurance Department, the Minister of Transport and Works would never be able to get up in here and tell any private sector corporation to pay their National Insurance money. While the Transport Board could not find money to pay the National Insurance Department, it could find an additional \$900 000 over a two-year period to pay, essentially, a local insurance broker for premiums for which the majority of those funds are going to leave Barbados. So, Barbadian workers cannot receive allowances or cannot go to the National Insurance Department and get their claims settled. Mr. Chairman, this Government has a responsibility to indicate to the public where the Minister for Transport and Works gets his power from to so alter a contract that it ends up costing the tax payers of Barbados an additional \$900 000. That is all we are asking the Minister. If the Minister does not want to answer he can say to the Honourable House, he does not have to be smart and answer one question.

The Honourable Member is entitled, God has given you good sense and other attributes to get up in here and say I am not answering the Opposition; I am not answering the tax payers; to hell with the people of Barbados; nobody has a right to say anything as long as I am Minister and you can even say ...

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I would like to see that you direct the Honourable Member for St. John to withdraw those remarks about telling the tax payers of Barbados to go to hell.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I do not think that is Parliamentary language.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I have not said he said it. I said that if he wants to, he can get up and say that we do not have any right to know why he wasted the Transport Board money. He can say that we have no right to know why he must reverse the decision of a Board that he appointed. He can say that he has absolutely no regard for the Financial Rules, the Act governing the Transport Board; his Ministerial responsibilities; propriety in public life or integrity. If he wants to say all of that he can say it. All I am saying is, do not pretend that you are not accountable at the end of the day.

Therefore, the Honourable Member knows what is being asked of him and he has it within his clear vision. I

would be uncomfortable if I were, at the end of day, found in a situation where the Transport Board – it is not the first time that the Transport Board has not been able to pay debts in Barbados, that is nothing new. That has been a long-standing problem for which we have been trying to find solutions. What it may be, it is the first time in the history of Barbados that the Minister has intervened in the contract process in the Transport Board, not for the purpose of ensuring a better level of service or for the purpose of ensuring greater efficiency but for the expressed purpose of spreading it around. A philosophy which, from the days of the Highway 2A contract, the Barbados Labour Party said that it is not part of their tradition. They said we do not function like that. We do not believe in addressing imbalances and that kind of thing.

I am trying to hear from the Minister of Transport and Public Works and if the Minister opts not to respond that is his entitlement but we will continue to ask for some kind of explanation.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, once again I want to thank the Honourable Members who participated in this debate and I would at this time say for the benefit for the Honourable Member for St. John that at some time very soon we would have a full debate in this Chamber on the Transport Board which I will not be running from.

Sir, I beg that Head 37 stand part.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I just want to assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central that I have all the time in the world. I have come here to work. If you want half-day, forget it. We can stay, exhaust this entire Head, if you want us to spend the entire night in here, or we can have the full debate now. We are ready to debate any Head that you wish to bring. I assumed that since you did not get the chance during the Estimates to answer those question and you would have seen this as an opportunity to answer the demands of Members of Parliament and the question that I am asking is no different to questions that Members on that Side are asking. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central wants the full debate on the Transport Board today, we are ready. 1.10 p.m.

HEAD NO. 37 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORT SUB-PROGRAMME
STATEMENT, THE AMENDMENT
IN SCHEDULE 2

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Amendment to the Head stands part.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD NO. 23 – THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IN THE
AMOUNT OF FOUR MILLION, EIGHT HUNDRED
AND FIFTY SEVEN THOUSAND AND
NINETY-TWO DOLLARS
(\$4 857 092)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the addendum was deficient to the extent that it left out Programme No. 361 – Services, but the actual funds under other expenditure supplementary provisions are properly printed. This is to catch up with a number of small bills to be settled.

Supplies and Materials – \$45 000 to meet the cost of stationery and office supplies.

Primary Health Care Services, sub-programme 362 – \$100 000 to settle the cost of vaccines as provided by PAHO revolving funds.

Dental Health – \$49 200, to procure supplies to the end of the fiscal year.

Animal Control Unit – \$4 182, supplies and material relating to the cost of lethal injection for putting to sleep stray dogs, *et cetera*.

Sanitation Service Authority – \$741 000.

Geriatric Hospital – \$175 000, supplies and material and food for the end of the fiscal year.

Those are the main items under this Head, Sir. I, therefore, beg to move that Head 23 stands part.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, when one looks at the amount of money being asked for the hospital, one might question the amount but then, when one considers the complaints that you hear every day in Barbados, like for example, sometimes on Ward B5 you cannot even get cooking gas to give a patient hot water or tea on mornings, this Opposition will be held responsible if it were to stop in the way of the Minister getting money for the Hospital. One must recognize that there is going to be a difference of over \$19 million in the coming year to this Ministry and one would expect that all the shortages previously heard of pertaining to this Hospital would not be heard in the coming year, because \$19 million has been allocated to this Ministry, which is more than 5 per cent.

We also have to deal with another situation. I would like to find out from the Minister of Health how much money is collected from the consultants of the Hospital for the usage of the Hospital because sometimes the impression is being given in this Parliament that when the Hospital is being used it is only the private consultants that gain. I would like to have a clarification. I do not want the wrong impression to go out. If we are going to be given the impression that there is a priority problem at the hospital, I might tend to agree with this particular point. I think the point must also be made that the Hospital and the management of the Hospital must also look at their responsibility when it comes to allocating operation times.

Consultants might use the Hospital but it is clear in my mind that the management system of the Hospital is also responsible when it comes to allocation times. Anyone who goes to the Hospital and has to use the private wards will recognize that there is a cost for the usage of that Hospital. I hope, Sir, we may be able to know the amount of money that comes back to the Hospital and whether it is only the consultants that might be blamed when it comes to the allocation times for operations, or whether it is the total structure of the Hospital.

We also would like to see the day when we recognize that we also have to look at the environmental impact on patients using the Q.E.H. I cannot understand, Sir, why today we still have a situation where the Ministry of Public Works and Transport cannot recognize that the road leading from Collymore Rock Roundabout to the Halls Road Roundabout that something must be done about the noise level on that road. I know that it is supposed to be a silent zone, Sir, but if you are going to allow the big trucks, the buses and everything to use that road, we must ask ourselves how is the Ministry of Public Works and Transport impacting on the health of patients by allowing vehicles to use that road.

We also have to understand, Sir, that it is not only the noise but also the emissions coming from those vehicles that will also impact on the Hospital. That is why I always find it difficult that we come to this Assembly and talk about the amount of money that is to be spent on the Hospital and we, in this Parliament, brag about having a Ministry called the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources and how much they are involved in protecting the environment, but yet we do not understand that if we are to allow that Hospital to be refurbished with the patients in the Hospital at the same time this will create environmental problems, not only for the Hospital but for those patients.

Sir, I am hoping that those who say that they are very much involved in the environment would recognize that the ministry given to them and the work that they have to do, that matters like these be studied and the appropriate report be sent to the new management of the Hospital. I recognize that there is a particular gentleman who has done a lot of work on the Hospital who came out and said that he is in

support of a one-hospital system. I cannot tell anybody whether to support a one-hospital system or a two-hospital system, but the truth is we have to make sure that the care delivered to patients in Barbados is the best care. Because people are not paying it does not mean that they must have sub-standard services and that is why if we are going to be regarding ourselves as a developed country we must recognize that the mass base of the people are the ones who will have to carry the country forward.

1.20 p.m.

These are people, Mr. Chairman, who cannot get on an aeroplane and leave Barbados to get health care. If we are going to have a continuous flow of people to do the productive work in Barbados, we have to make sure that the health services which are provided to those people are the best. It does not necessarily mean that because you are not paying in terms of cash that if the service is not good that you will not pay with your life. We must ask ourselves if we must continue to allow our people to be treated in such a way. I hope, Sir, that those who have ears to hear would hear.

Those who believe in this day and age that Barbados can continue to have one hospital and who want to regard themselves as a developing country must recognise that if we are also going to be a part of a service industry and a service economy that we must have a second hospital in order for us to have a proper impact on our health services.

I thank you very much.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I support the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy about the noise level in the area of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport is very concerned about the level of noise and emission in the area of the hospital especially on the Martindales Road area.

I visited the hospital some time ago to visit the present Speaker of this Chamber and while there I asked him if the noise does not affect him at night. He told me that all during the day, even at night, he can hear the noise, the blowing of the loud horns and so on especially those ZR vans with these fancy air horns.

Mr. Chairman, that area is really a silent zone area. There are signs there depicting that the area is a silent zone area but these PSVs and so on continue to annoy the peace of the hospital. The Martindales Road is up for repairs very soon. In fact, the whole road will be rehabilitated. We are hoping that when that is done that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport would be able to put more attractive signs in the area letting motorists know that the area is a silent zone area and appealing to them to stop blowing their horns.

I do agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and we will try to do as much public relations as we can through GIS and radio programmes and so on to make people aware that the area is a silent zone area.

I thank you.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, this one does not have to do with the Transport Board although the Transport Board buses might pass by that side of the road.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy raised a question but since this is not my substantive Ministry, I cannot give him the answer to the revenue that accrues to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital from consultants. I will undertake, during the holiday, to get it for him so that some time after we resume I can give it to him.

I was checking the Revenue Estimates at page IX and I see all kinds of things here, Sir. So I think it is a legitimate question that he asked because there is a fee for Nursing and Midwifery Exams of \$4 000. There are fees for Pathological Laboratories, Reimbursements, Charges for Vaccines and Certification and Registration of Premises but I do not see any item for fees from consultants. I think this might be an area that perhaps bears its own line but I will raise it with the Minister of Health.

With that assurance, Sir, I beg to move that Head 23 stand part.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that.

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

Asides.

HEAD 19 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AMENDMENT TO EXPLANATORY NOTE IN SCHEDULE II

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I beg to move that the amendment to the Explanatory notes as circulated with the Resolution do now pass.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: 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. G. A. CLARKE, Mr. CHAIRMAN, reported to His Honour the DEPUTY SPEAKER, the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee of Supply with amendments and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that brings us to the close of Government's Business for the day. I wish to thank all Honourable Members and the Opposition for their cooperation in getting through this Money Resolution which tidies up the Government's accounts to the end of the financial year.

I believe that all Honourable Members are deserving of a break. We have worked very hard this year with some long hours, almost every week, and I now have the greatest pleasure in moving that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 24, 2001 at 11.00 a.m. in the morning.

In so doing, I wish all Honourable Members, yourself, the Chairman of Committees, the Staff of Parliament, the Clerks, the Reporters, the Police and the Press a very Happy Easter and God's willing we will return on April 24, 2001.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that.

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

1.30 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 1

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting held on
Monday, March 21, 2001.

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

Curriculum 2000 – Rationale and Guidelines for
Curriculum Reform.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND 2

Annual Report of the National Conservation
Commission for the period April, 1997 to March
1998.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS 2

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

ORDER NO. 9 – RESOLUTION THAT THE SUM
OF FIFTY MILLION, THREE HUNDRED
AND NINETY-FOUR THOUSAND, TWO
HUNDRED AND NINETEEN DOLLARS BE
GRANTED FROM THE CONSOLIDATED
FUND AND BE PLACED AT THE
DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO
SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2000 –
2001 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO
THIS RESOLUTION AND THE
SUBPROGRAM STATEMENT FOR HEAD
37 AND THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO
HEAD 19 AND HEAD 34 BE AMENDED AS
SHOWN IN SCHEDULE II 2

HEAD 24 – MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATION – \$71,787 2

Hon. H. F. Lashley, 2, 3; Mr. D. St. E.
Kellman, 2.

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS –
\$933,969 3

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 3, 8, 9; Mr. D. J. H.
Thompson, 3, 5; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 4, 5;
Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 6; Rev. J. J. S.
Atherley, 6, 7.

HEAD 30 – ATTORNEY GENERAL – \$265,433 10

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 10; Mr. D. St. E.
Kellman, 10.

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE –
\$36,365,938 11

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 11; Mr. D. St. E.
Kellman, 11.

HEAD 37 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORT – \$7,900,000 12

Hon. R. D. Marshall, 12, 13; Mr. D. St. E.
Kellman, 12; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 12, 13.

HEAD 23 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH –
\$4,857,092 14

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 14, 15, 16; Mr. D.
St. E. Kellman, 14; Hon. R. D. Marshall, 15.

ADJOURNMENT 16

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 16.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ATHERLEY, Rev. J. J. S. (St. Michael West)
CLARKE, Hon. G. A. (St. George North)
EASTMOND, Hon. R. C. (St. James North)
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. H. F. (St. Michael South East)
MARSHALL, Hon. R. D. (St. Michael West Central)
SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. Thomas)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)