
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.15 a.m. on Tuesday, February 12, 2002.

PRESENT

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

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (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 (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of Labour and Social Security)

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Physical Development and Environment)

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS

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

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P. (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, B.Sc., M.Sc. M.Phil., J.P. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of Economic Development, Industry and International Business)

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P. (Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Prayers were led by Reverend J. J. S. Atherley.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Minutes of Tuesday, February 5, 2002.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, February 5, 2002, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the National Union of Public Workers (Guarantee of Loan) Bill, 2002 be read a first time.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting.

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 – RESOLUTION TO TAKE NOTE OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED TO ADVISE ON A POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR A NEW PUBLIC SERVICE ACT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this debate will signal an opportunity on the part of the Government of Barbados to extend the process of consultation to the Parliament of this country through the action which began on April 8, 1999 when Cabinet established a broad-based committee to review the policy framework for a new Public Service Act.

Mr. Speaker, it is believed that this process would be incomplete were we not to give Members of this Chamber and the Other Chamber the opportunity to have their input to begin to express their views in a constructive way as to how we should proceed with the modernisation of the Barbados Public Service.

Sir, I would choose at this stage to give a brief historical overview and to remind all Honourable Members that part of the reputation that Barbados has gained for stability and good governance is due not only to the fortune that we have had with the quality of persons entering public life in the political arena, particularly in the last 50 years, but it is also due in large measure to a reasonably well-structured and well-functioning public service.

Indeed, it is remarked throughout the Commonwealth that Barbados has had the benefit of systems for a long time which were essentially provided under a colonial structure but which, today in a modern Barbados, seeks to cater to the needs of all Barbadians irrespective of race, status of birth or gender.

This Government recognises that if we are to remain competitive and if the Barbadian public service is to be as

important to us as it has been in previous years to other Governments, then there is need for review and modernisation to meet the times within which it is functioning.

Mr. Speaker, it is significant that we speak not from a perspective of a public service established in 1966 but indeed from the legal framework which goes as far back as 1981 with the establishment of the Executive Committee Act which sought to provide for the establishment of an Executive Committee made up of representation of the Legislative Council to give them the functions which we compare today with Cabinet Government and the public servants who help execute that.

This process would have been further strengthened to remove from the colonial service all the powers then held by the colonial service when Governor Sir Graham Bushe in 1946 established the Cabinet Government with the Bushe experiment such that the Attorney General was no longer the chief spokesman of the Executive but the person who commanded the majority of support in this House.

These measures would have seen a shift in the balance of power largely because those who were not elected would have been responsible for the administration of the affairs of the country and the execution of real power in Barbados.

The Bushe experiment eventually resulted in the development of Cabinet Government and then upon the independence of this country and the acceptance of the Constitution of Barbados, after its passage through this Parliament, there was no doubt as to the clear division between those who were accountable to the electorate, to Parliament and those who were appointed by reason of their position as public servants, vested with a certain security of tenure, under the Constitution of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, it is significant that over the years at various points there have been reviews that have not sought to deal with the legislation so much but more with the question of regrading and reclassification. To that extent, this constitutes the first major review of the legislative and administrative arrangement in modern Barbados for the public service.

Mr. Speaker, it is for this reason, that the Government of Barbados, in particular the Minister responsible for the Civil Service, the Prime Minister, would have deemed that the widest possible consultation is desirable since one does not want to change mechanisms, rules and law without giving all who may be affected the appropriate benefit to comment and to be able to have an input.

Equally, it is envisaged that the drafting and passage of the new Public Service Act should be able to serve the needs of this country easily for a period of 25 to 30 years and

in circumstances where we recognise that the critical importance of the public service, that it is absolutely necessary to effect the implementation of Government's policies, priorities and programme.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this debate will be a very significant one because it gives Members of Parliament an opportunity to have an input into those matters which the Government of Barbados will consider before settling on the policy which would inform the draftsmen in the drafting of this new Public Service Act.

Mr. Speaker, I am also aware that it is intended that the drafting and introduction of this new Bill should be completed by the end of this calendar year such that the process which began in 1999 can come to an effective closure and be able to influence positively the process of governance in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the key thing we must focus on is that it is really limiting to want to create a new economy, to want to change the way in which the social sectors and social services in this country function and, indeed, the relationship between the citizens and Government without recognising that there is a responsibility to ensure that the framework which is charged with the responsibility of implementing Government's policy and programmes also benefits from similar reform.

Indeed, Sir, so many processes have changed over the years with the advent of technology increasing the pace at which information moves and the pace at which people can move in a more instantaneous fashion, challenge the precepts and the rules on which the current legislation is based in Barbados. Concomitantly, there have been improvements in the range of framework of employment in the private sector and indeed, in the relative importance of the various sectors of the economy such that the competitive nature of Barbados would be undermined if we do not ensure that people can do business with the Government of Barbados in a transparent, efficient and quick manner but also that those who work within the public service of Barbados have the capacity to understand clearly what are their obligations as public servants, what is expected of them, what are the terms and conditions under which they are hired, what are those things that might cause their promotion, discipline or their otherwise relationship in terms of pensions and gratuities in the public service.

11.25 a.m.

I think it would be fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that both the substantive legislation and the subsidiary legislation which govern the rules and operations of the public sector of Barbados can become archaic and byzantine, to say the least. Indeed, only those who have time and who have been trained in the area of law generally, or have been versed in the

practice of the public service far in excess of many decades can properly understand what has been said very often by the law which constitutes the framework under which public servants act.

It is for those reasons as well as the recognition of the fact that if Barbados is to position itself in an emerging global environment where competitiveness is not only the buzzword but the requirement, that the recognition of an economy which is driven by services and which requires a large element of foreign direct investment requires a responsive, transparent and efficient public service.

Sir, as I said at the beginning, I believe that we have genuinely been well served by the public service of Barbados and that our reputation for good governance and stability have had something to do with the quality of public servants that we have been able to attract. Sir, I am also cognisant that there have been too many changes in the way in which we do things in the modern world in terms of what is required of us. With the concomitant shift, reliance and faith in those services, it is also incumbent upon the Government to ensure that citizens of this country can benefit from the high quality of service in the delivery of Government services while, at the same time, ensuring that Government services can facilitate and encourage public investment, both domestic and foreign.

Mr. Speaker, this Committee was established under the chairmanship of the then head of the Civil Service, Mr. Erskine Griffith, now Ambassador Griffith, the Ambassador to Geneva. It comprised the Cabinet Secretary, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Service, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform, (as it then was), the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chief Personnel Officer, the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Director of the Office of Public Sector Reform. Private sector participants were found in the form of Mr. Edward Bushell, Divisional Manager, BARTEL, Mrs. Marguerite Estwick from PriceWaterhouseCoopers. Mr. Glen Cumberbatch was initially appointed to the Committee. He was then Human Resources Manager at the Barbados Tourism Authority (BTA). Dr. Neville Duncan, before he went off, was a reader in Politics at the University of the West Indies; Dr. P. I. Gomes, Executive Director of CARICAD. Professor Albert Theodore from the University of the West Indies was initially invited but unfortunately was unable to serve. Mr. Patrick Frost, General Secretary, Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB). Their Report therefore is the substance of the matter that is now being debated before this Honourable Chamber and it is the view of all Honourable Members on this Report that we should solicit at this point before bringing to a closure the question of a settled policy, such that it may inform the Chief Parliamentary Counsel in the drafting of a new Public Servants Act.

Sir, I would take some time to reflect on some of the recommendations of the Report but I trust that the wider Barbados would also have the opportunity to reflect on the elements of it because having been laid in the House of Assembly now for some time, it is indeed a public document and I would therefore expect and anticipate that those charged with the responsibility of informing the public through the media would take this document and they would do well to serialise it in such a way that the greatest possible distribution can be had since ultimately every Barbadian is affected by the process of governance which is, indeed, characterized by the actions, decisions, work and behaviour of the public service of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, in my view, the Report seeks to address a number of matters in a very comprehensive way. I cannot say to you, and I will come to that before I sit today, that I necessarily agree with all of the recommendations – and these are my personal views when I reached them – but I do believe that the Report is reasonably comprehensive and, indeed, has established a good basis upon which dialogue can flow.

The Committee, through a number of subcommittees, has addressed its mind to a number of areas: the management of the public service, conditions of service, financial management, management of training for public servants, discipline and grievance handling, accountability and a code of ethics, secondment of public officers, establishment of temporary posts in the public service, the role of the Internet and other aspects of technology. What was also welcomed is that, as appendices, they have drafted Codes of Conduct, Codes of Discipline and Codes of Employment, as well as a review of the General Orders. They have also listed those persons who have attended the public meetings which were held on 5th October, 1999, 12th October, 1999 and 26th October, 1999, so as to facilitate the general views of the public prior to the settlement of this Report and the submission of their recommendations.

Sir, I believe that it is fair to say that this Government has gone to all lengths to ensure the fullest process of participation in the settlement of what should constitute a new framework of this Public Service Act.

Sir, I addressed briefly the recommendations of the Committee as it relates to those areas as mentioned. May I start at the point of recognising that the Committee would have reflected on these areas with the benefit of their experience but also with the recognition of Government's objectives as to where Barbados should go in respect to both the management of its economy and management of the society.

Sir, on the issue of the management of the Commission, the Committee recognised that generally there was a

perception that the principles on which the Public Service was based, re-enforce lack of control, lack in the element of trust and failed to encourage employees or management participant in a dynamic environment. Indeed, the Committee felt that if the public servants were to provide sound leadership in enhancing Barbados' competitiveness while providing an environment for excellence in the delivery of goods and service, then human resource development and management systems must be reformed.
11.35 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, this Committee reviewed the role of the various service commissions and it differs from the Constitutional Review Commission. Unlike the Constitutional Review Commission which recommended the establishment of a Teaching Service Commission and a permanent Chairman of the Public Service Commission, this Committee felt that there was no need for either the Teaching Service Commission or indeed a permanent chairman of the Public Service Commission since it was desirable to have further delegation of functions within the public service and that in the context of size, Barbados' public service was still relatively small.

They felt the decentralisation of functions eliminated the need for any full-time chairman and that one secretariat, as opposed to three as recommended by the Constitutional Review Commission, properly staffed would be able to handle the workload of the Services Commission, given the relatively small size of the public service.

They also felt that the Constitutional Amendments of 1974 should be reversed, that is, the power that was vested in the Prime Minister to be able to appoint persons to temporary and unestablished posts, I will comment on that later, Sir, when I come to reflecting on my own views as to this Committee's work.

They also felt a services commission should be appointed by Parliament and accountable to Parliament and that in circumstances they should not be subjected to the direction, interference or any type of control in the discharge of their function and they should have the right also to appoint temporary and unestablished staff and that in circumstances generally, there should be a conversion of the Committee of Permanent Secretaries to the establishment of a Board of Permanent Secretaries, which generally would advise the Prime Minister on the management functions of the public service, to advise on the policies to administer and develop in the public service, to consider and make recommendations on any specific matter referred to it by the Prime Minister, to coordinate management functions of the Public Service, to accelerate the making of decisions, particularly in matters requiring the involvement of several departments and agencies and

promote the competitive development of Barbados for the benefit of all of its citizens and to create in general a structured working environment which is conducive to increased productivity and greater job satisfaction.

It was recommended that the Head of the Civil Service position be established in law and that person should be designated as the Chairman of the Board of Permanent Secretaries.

Those generally constituted some of the recommendations made under the topic of management the management of the public service. The area of training occupied a major focus of this Committee. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it was generally felt that the framework and organisation of administering arrangement for training needed to be reviewed. It was noted that currently training was not a requirement and was indeed largely undertaken by those public servants who wanted to expand knowledge. In some cases, it was negatively felt that some people use training to avoid the performance of their duties, particularly when they continue to apply and apply after one occasion.

They felt that training was usually initiated by officers and that Government's leave regulations concerning the grant of leave to undertake training were generous, but unfortunately were not tied to any stated goals or policies. This situation was clearly reflected as untenable and the Committee posited that training was a crucial function and it should be linked to the improvement in performance of the public sector and therefore deemed it necessary to have a policy and access to training for all public sector workers.

The Committee was further of the view that persons moving into senior positions in the public service, ought to show that they had been exposed to some level of ongoing training or education since the completion of the formal schooling that they had, even if that training was at graduate level.

One of the important recommendations, in my view, was the recommendation that all officers should receive some level of induction training as well as the establishment of a cadet scheme which would have a fast-track training scheme for officers who are seen to have leadership potential within the public service.

They felt that Government needed to articulate a clear training policy which reflected the goals and objectives of the Government and which was centred on the enhancement of the skills of the Public Service towards becoming a more efficient and effective Public Service. They indeed recommended that the Training Committee be established by law and that leave should be made not to the Committee alone and the Minister but directed to the appropriate services commission.

On the issue of discipline and grievance, the Constitutional Review Commission reflected on the fact that very often there is ambiguity as to what should be the appropriate disciplinary measures taken within the public service. The law, as I said, is very complex and, indeed, the Constitutional Review Commission recommended strongly the establishment of a very clear set of procedures which were simple, fair and swift and which would eliminate the deficiencies currently identified in the current system.

They recommended that a Civil Service Code, including a Code of Ethics, Discipline and Safety should be developed and introduced and that this Code should include penalties for contravention of its provisions. They felt that officers who were responsible for human resource management in various ministries and departments, including the permanent secretaries and heads of departments, should be trained specifically to deal with disciplinary and grievance matters and that indeed a unit should be established within the Personnel Administration Division to deal specifically with grievance and disciplinary matters.

On the matter of grievances, it noted that other than a collective agreement with the NUPW and the Barbados Secondary Teachers Union, that there was no appropriate code to handle grievance measures in the public service. And that in the circumstances, there was a need for the present instruments generally to be used as a basis for developing a new, comprehensive and efficient grievance handling instrument for use in the public sector and that persons should be trained in the handling of grievances and that this must be ongoing and not a one-off exercise.

It felt that the Public Service Act should specifically exclude the involvement of the political directorate from the process of resolving grievances and that an Appeals Board should be established with authority given under the Constitution for public servants to have a mechanism that allows for appealing of decisions from the Commission.

I believe that we would be well served to have a closer look at the draft codes which constitute the Appendix to the Report and to get a clearer idea as to some of the things that were contemplated by the Committee when they made these recommendations as to how they should function.

It is significant that in the code of discipline, they divide offenses into major offenses and minor offenses and without seeking to go into more, for fear that becomes the substance of what is Reported in this Chamber, I leave it to the media to print that draft Code of Discipline for comments generally of the public.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Constitutional Review Commission addressed its mind to the issue of conditions of

service. The Committee reflected generally that while the majority of the provisions of the General Orders are embodied in legislation, certain provisions were not law and, indeed, public administrators are divided on this issue. Once again, the complex nature of these legislative and administrative provisions need clear clarification and there was a feeling that there was a need for greater transparency in the recruitment, appointment, promotion and transfer of officers and that, indeed, the Civil Service code, to which I just referred, should spell out clearly the criteria for such.

11.45 a.m.

The Committee believes that there should be standards set out in the Qualifications Order which should be strictly adhered to in appointing officers to the posts. They also reflected on the fact that there was a growing popularity of aptitude and psychological testing techniques in the modern workplace and that some of these same techniques could well be used in the public service, where appropriate, in an effort to improve the match between the requirements of the job and the attributes of office holders.

The Committee reflected on the need for probation Reports on officers who have been appointed to posts in which they have been acting for a substantial period of time. It was agreed that these Reports should be examined by the Personnel Administration Division with a view in some instances to removing the requirement to those circumstances where the period of time in which persons were acting in a post was excessively long.

Just to clarify what I said, the Committee felt that while probation Reports were needed generally for persons who are appointed to posts, that where a person was acting for an inordinately long period of time the policy with respect to the need for such Reports should be examined by the Personnel Administration Division with a view to removing its requirement. What they have not stated is whether this should be a case by case situation or a comprehensive policy in respect of all persons acting in a post for a long period of time.

The Committee felt that the criteria for appointment to a post should be clearly spelt out and adhered to so that all persons, particularly public officers, know the requirements in advance, and that transparency could be achieved therefore in respect of appointments, promotions and transfers. They felt that no person should act indefinitely in a post for longer than an agreed time without either being appointed, or if not being appointed, reverting to the former post if they proved to be unsuitable. They felt that the transfer of a public officer should be either to fill a vacancy or to assist in an officer's development but should not be used as a disciplinary tool.

The Committee was firm on the view that there was a need to rationalise the payment of allowances within the

philosophy that an officer's salary should reflect the total compensation for the duties and responsibilities of the job. Many of these allowances, in fact, are hangovers from a previous era and some of them are not even relevant to the way in which the society is ordered today.

On the issue of accountability and a code of ethics, the Committee noted that there were few standards of performance which existed as a general rule in the public service. They also believed in view of certain tendencies that relate to the diversion of public resources for private gain, corruption, conflict of interest and breaches of rules and regulations that the proposed Public Service Act should deal with these matters in those circumstances.

The Committee made a number of recommendations:

1. Compliance mechanisms, along with penalties should be put in place to ensure greater accountability;
2. Such mechanisms should include
 - (a) mechanisms for disclosure of interest;
 - (b) a requirement that it is the duty of all public servants to discharge functions reasonably and according to the law;
 - (c) a requirement that a public servant should report to the appropriate authorities evidence of criminal or unlawful activity by others if they become aware of such breaches;
 - (d) the setting of performance standards for individual departments and ministries;
 - (e) a requirement that each ministry submit to the appropriate authority a quarterly Report of its performance.

The Committee felt that a Civil Service code should be developed setting out the constitutional framework within which all civil servants work and the values that they are expected to uphold and that the code should cover core values, selection and promotion on merit, political impartiality, the provision of the best independent advice to the government of the day and the delivery of services for the benefit of citizens and not for the convenience of service providers.

The Committee addressed its mind too, Mr. Speaker, to the issue of the secondment of public officers and

reflected on the legal position as it relates to secondment. They showed that the research of May 1999 reflected that 60 persons, including 11 policemen and 14 teachers, were now seconded from the public service and that while there were benefits to be derived from it, it was felt that an objective assessment needed to be undertaken to reveal the full implications of such arrangements for secondment.

The Committee reflected on the advantages and disadvantages and settled on a number of recommendations which are available for persons to read but essentially continuing to feel that:

- (1) the rights of the officer should be preserved while on secondment;
- (2) that the secondment should be for a period not exceeding the life of a particular project or particular programme where such existed, rather than going on and on; and that as far as possible that;
- (3) a post in the service of another government agency, a secondment should be limited to no more than two years.

The Committee also addressed its mind to the question of temporary posts in the public service and felt that temporary posts should be created for specific periods rather than indefinitely and that the duration of a temporary post should not be for more than two years in the first instance with the exception of posts that are provided specifically for the execution of projects.

The Committee felt that the Ministry of Civil Service needed to do comprehensive reviews of these temporary posts to determine whether there was a genuine need for the retention of such posts on a long-term basis where they did in fact, exist, and that there should be a rationalisation of existing temporary posts within an organisation before making such a request.

Finally, the Committee addressed itself to the role of the Internet and recognised that the Internet in many ways has substantially transformed the way that we do business across the globe. They felt that there was no coordinated electronic government initiative within Government and that government agencies have generally been following their own dictates with regard to the Internet and to the issue, for example, of websites and the lack of uniformity in terms of site layout, domain names and e-mail addresses among the various agencies of government. They felt that there was no monitoring agency providing specific guidance on these issues and at best there really were no standards governing employees' behaviour with respect to using the internet. This

Committee made a number of recommendations in respect of that.

The Committee recommended that a central agency should be set up and empowered to manage government's internet activity. They also felt that any ministry, department or agency planning to establish an internet service, should first receive approval from the designated central agency. That approval was required in respect of registration of the domain name, design, content, evaluation criteria, hosting of sites and contractual arrangements. They felt that the central agency should also have overall responsibility for the development and maintenance of websites by retaining a pool of pertinent human resources and for internet security within other agencies and that the guidelines produced by the central agency needed to be reviewed and updated at least every six months in order to keep abreast of the dynamism of the Internet.

11.55 a.m.

The Committee felt that that agency should have the power to demand the removal of Government agency sites from the Internet when they do not comply with the rules and regulations and that other standards, including methodology, technology and data attributes must be established to achieve inter-operability among agencies and that this agency should provide consultancy services to Government agencies that wish to have an internet presence and, indeed, give guidance in all phases to any internet-related projects. They felt that all Ministries should have a web presence before September 31, 2002 and that accounting officers had to have at least a working knowledge of internet and be familiar with Government's use of internet guidelines, that Government employees should be informed that the accounting officer has the authority to monitor generally internet activity; that surfing on the internet, employees should insure that they adhere to the necessary precautions to prevent repetitive strain injury since the mouse and keyboard have in some instances been cited as the culprits in that arena; that e-mail addresses and internet site addresses should be on all official correspondence, business cards and publications of Government and that electronic signatures which are accepted as a current and legal means of identification should be accepted in the same way as written signatures and that any electronic transaction appointed by electronic signature should be treated as official.

The Committee also felt that e-mail correspondence like all other correspondence should be acknowledged within a specified time frame and that the matter contained within the correspondence should also be dealt within a specified time frame and Government should establish public officers' access to interest-free loans to purchase computers.

Those recommendations reflect, Mr. Speaker, not all, but indeed the majority of recommendations made by the

Committee established in April 1999 by Cabinet to advise on a policy framework for a new Public Service Act. Needless, to say, Sir, as the person introducing this Resolution I felt that I had an obligation to reflect for the record of Parliament in summary form those things which constitute or have constituted the core of the recommendations of the Committee on public service.

I think generally, Mr. Speaker, that I therefore would wish to proceed to my own views on the Report and to be able to have an opportunity to have some input on this process through Parliament. I hope, therefore, that I can clarify that those things which follow now reflect my personal views and not the views of the Government. There is no doubt that there is much of which we can be proud but there are a number of weaknesses that have to be highlighted within the context of the Barbados Public Service and, like the Committee, I agree that there is too much centralising of functions, too much excessive delays, very often initiative is stifled within the public service and there is a disinclination to delegate functions generally.

I have spent under eight years working as a Minister in Government and very often, it seems to me that decisions which can be taken at a lower level and taken well and efficiently are brought to the highest level for senior civil servants to take them, irrespective of the fact that they can be appropriately taken at lower levels. When everything is centralised to such an extent that only one or two people can make decisions in Government then the whole process slows down. I believe that steps taken by this Government today have in some measure been designed to start to deal with the process of further delegation of functions within the public service as well as trying to establish clear roles and clear functions for public servants.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that when the Government established the Office of Public Sector Reform that it in some measure started to address some of these problems. There are some people who would wish to be unkind and say that it is only a logo but the truth is that for public sector reform to be effective it has to be comprehensive and there has also to be opportunity to be able to have both political will and senior administrative will matching such that we can bring about the changes that need to be brought about.

I want to refer to the fact that there have been a number of developments and achievements by the Office of Public Sector Reform which they have unfortunately not shared effectively with the public. Many departments have worked systematically with that office in being able to bring about changes in the way that they do business and, indeed, Sir, in the way that the public interacts with them. I can state categorically that the Office of Public Sector Reform has been able to work with the Personnel Administration and has been able to complete the work with the Immigration

Department. I think it is fair to say that anybody going into the Immigration Department in the last year or two can see a significant difference in the turn around time and the way in which they do business.

Very often people would like it to be even quicker, but we have to recognise that Immigration is not just to give out a service but there are also security considerations which have to be reviewed by those charged with the responsibility of determining who should benefit from the rights under the Immigration Act. In those circumstances, I genuinely believe that the Immigration Department has been able to improve considerably, although I recognise that there is still some more room for such improvement.

They have been working with the registries in a number of Ministries, from the Prime Minister's Office right back through to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Psychiatric Hospital, the Ministry of Education. They have been working in terms of reviewing and helping with the organisational restructuring with which I was well familiar.

Most important of all, the Employee Assistance Programme was one of the programmes established by the Office for Public Sector Reform. Indeed, since the establishment of the Employee Assistance Programme, 683 public officers have sought individual counselling at Network Services Centre, recognising that very often a public servant is limited by other factors in his or her life in terms of the level of productivity that they can reach and in those circumstances where they can be given such assistance the Government ought to be able to help because it should be concerned with the general well-being and welfare of public servants. There have been a number of other workshops held by the Employee Assistance Programme. I believe that programme has been able to bring direct benefit to a number of public servants wanting assistance and it is one of the successes as an initiative of the office of Public Sector Reform.

12.05 p.m.

One of the other major areas of reform in the public service since this Government has been here is the reform of Government's financial and human resource functions through the introduction of the Smart Stream system.

Mr. Speaker, Smart Stream operates using a centralised database which is managed from one point and this programme is now found across a number of Ministries. It ensures that departments cannot spend funds unless there are sufficient funds in finance to warrant and the annual vote approved by this Parliament. If there are not sufficient funds, then an error appears on the machine and no cheque can be written. Therefore, no overspending can take place in those Ministries in which Smart Stream has already been introduced. This will result and has

resulted in significant savings and efficiencies to Government in those Ministries in which Smart Stream is already present. I believe that this is one of the chief successes that we have seen as an administration in streamlining financial and human resource functions.

Indeed, Sir, it is also significant that all outstanding purchase orders and requisitions at the end of the year can also be easily identified and are automatically rolled over to the new year so that departments need now to make every effort to ensure that purchase orders are completed in a timely fashion and paid for at the end of the year or that they cancel orders when they realise they cannot receive them.

Sir, Smart Stream has been introduced to a number of Ministries. It is not yet in all Ministries but it is anticipated that the process will soon be completed and when that happens the processing of Government's payroll, payments and management generally will be at a far superior level than existed prior to the introduction of Smart Stream. We believe that it brought discipline to the management of Government's financial and human resource processes and that upon completion, the discipline should be reflected in all Ministries and not just those who have to date been exposed to Smart Stream.

We also believe that it allows for more useful management information by allowing persons to find, analyse and drill information down to its lowest detail so that there can be an attempt to eradicate any inefficiencies in departments.

Sir, I also want to address myself to the question of discipline and grievance handling in the service. The decision in the matter of the courts in recent years as it relates to public service law clearly reflects that you cannot have a system where people simply do not know how they can appropriately be disciplined or what rights they have if they are disciplined and expect people to feel good. Any process which seeks to discipline anybody has to be simple, certain and fair.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that the time has come for us to ensure that the framework which reflects simplicity, fairness and certainty, while ensuring that matters can be dealt with expeditiously rather than hanging over people's heads for a long period of time, is the kind of system that should be introduced into the public service of Barbados.

It is a fact that not many officers in the service can tell you what is the procedure of discipline that they must enforce on another public officer or that would have to be enforced over them. I believe that is unfair and I look forward to the Public Service Act being able to clarify these issues in the minds of all public servants and those entities

that would have the responsibility of administering the legislative provisions.

Mr. Speaker, let us not fool ourselves, it is always difficult in a small society, whether in the public service, the private sector or wherever for persons to reflect on the performance of people. It is very difficult because in a small society everybody knows one another. In some instances there may be family relationships and in other instances there may be relationships going back to childhood *et cetera*, and I think all persons working in Government can generally agree that even though they were archaic and complex, there have been provisions for disciplining people but people are reluctant to use them because they do not want to comment negatively on other persons who work with them so there is a "let live" attitude. It is a fundamental difficulty that as a small society we have to face.

These things speak now not to legislation but speak to attitude and approach. I will make the point that the one thing we cannot achieve with the new Public Service Act is the legislation of a new work ethic which is necessary to make these new provisions come alive. Mr. Speaker, that is something we are going to have to face.

Indeed, Sir, it is significant for me when reading the autobiography of Lee Quan Yu from Singapore that as far back as the 1960's he said then, in reflecting upon the need for their public sector to respond to where he wanted to take Singapore and I quote:

"We needed new attitudes, the most important of which that pay must accord with performance not time spent on the job".

Sir, one may wonder, if I did not say where that quotation came from, whether it was not appropriate for Barbados at this stage. The only sad thing is that Lee Quan Yu reflected that in 1965 and Barbados is now seeking to reflect that in 2002. What is also sad is that Barbados and Singapore in many instances are competing in the same global environment.

Sir, we have a long way to go, not just in passing the legislation but seeking to encourage public servants to adopt the basic precepts of a healthy work ethic to be able to recognise that their individual involvement makes a substantial difference to the output of the whole, to the outcome of the whole, to the success of the Government as a whole as well as to individual departments.
12.15 p.m.

In many instances, one cannot simply hold onto terms and conditions that existed before without reference to whether they are relevant to the environment within which they are working. This cultural change in respect of work

ethic and this recognition of the need for accountability as well as the need for honesty in reviewing the performance of others are all things that we have to approach not just as a Government but as a society concomitantly with the introduction of any new Public Service Act if we are truly to see the benefits of it.

Sir, I respect the view of the Committee but I say that those things are absolutely necessary if we are to see a substantial difference in how we do business.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, unfortunately we can recount many stories of persons who have been hired under one set of terms and conditions. They are only supposed to work 8 to 4 p.m. Anything outside of 4 o'clock is overtime. In truth and in fact, the service which they render is not capable of a neat allocation between 8 and 4 o'clock. What they should be working is any 8 hours in a 24-hour period. But we build in cost and we become uncompetitive when we seek to hold on to those measures which do not allow for flexibility and do not allow ultimately for true security of tenure.

Sir, there is no sense in a few thousand people having absolute security of tenure and the rest of the economy around you is collapsing such that there can be no long-term benefit or no real improvement in the quality of life. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that just as we did in 1991 when we agreed to the establishment of the protocol, again today we have to recognize that we have not yet reformed all of the processes which act as disincentives to investment and disincentives to sustainable economic growth and improvement to the quality of life of all Barbadians.

Sir, I do not believe that Customs officers, for example, should have the right to charge overtime when they go to deal with somebody's container on their premises. I believe that if you are performing a service, then perform the service. You should structure your employment in such a way that we can most effectively perform that service for the benefit of the public. I do not believe, as I believe the Honourable Member for St. James South mentioned in here a few years ago, that laboratory services and laundry services at the hospital are only needed at a specific period of time. Therefore, people stay on to get the overtime. This has to happen to establish what is the core nature of the service that is being delivered and structure the time to deal with it.

One of the problems that I face in my Ministry which we will have to resolve after the consultation with the workers and the union is the change in how Barbadians post mail. I am told, Sir, that years ago people would post mail generally in the morning or before midday. For the most part now the post office receives most of the mail in the afternoon after work. Unless you have an evening shift to sort, you

have to wait 12 hours while that mail is in your possession to sort it for the first time. Therefore, it contributes to the delay in getting out the mail within an efficient time period. Those are the practices we have to review.

Sir, I also believe that a modern independent Barbados has a duty to review itself. There are a lot of hangovers from a previous time where many members of the public service were not Barbadians but came from other parts of the Commonwealth, particularly Britain. In the context of the teaching service and many other departments, the concept of leave passages exists so that a person may have leave every few years to be able to go back to his or her country of residence. Another prime example of the public service of Barbados is the University of the West Indies.

When the University of the West Indies was first established there was a need to bring in a lot of lecturers and professors. Today, there is a substantial number of members who have been exposed to tertiary level training and are filling posts within the University. We still have a system which recognizes the need for housing allowance and all types of allowances that are linked to the recognition that most of the workers come from within the country they are working and not outside. These things are entitled to them by right as opposed to on the basis of where merit requires, for example, for a person who is being relocated. In that case, what should be given is a relocation allowance as opposed to a housing allowance on a continuous basis.

Sir, there are lots of anomalies in the terms and conditions in the way we structure the delivery of work and services that have to be reviewed. Mr. Speaker, it is not easy because we do not like changes in our society. But there must be a recognition that the world in which we live is substantially different. Once we take a decision, Mr. Speaker, to premise that our development should be on the basis of services, wealth, investment creation, attraction of foreign investment, then there has to be a recognition that we have to be an efficient public service delivering the services that people anticipate in a good time frame but also at a level of efficiency such that people will not be forced to complain about the quality.

I also believe, Sir, and this is my personal view, that we have to stamp out any form of petty or major corruption throughout the Service.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there is nothing more destructive to the society than persons having to accept or be forced to pay for a service which they are not required to pay for by law if they are to get the service done in good time. I, therefore, support the requirement that departments should have charters that clearly reflect to the public what service is available, within what time frame, so that people can with certainty anticipate that this is the time it will take

to have something done without having to pay somebody in their back pocket to get things advanced for them.
12.25 p.m.

There is nothing more cancerous than that, Sir, therefore, apart from the legislative framework that will come, there has to be a clear signal by all right-thinking members in this society that we will not tolerate any form of corruption however large or small. Therefore, Sir, I believe this is one of the things that is necessary for a well-functioning, strong and efficient public service as well as a strong, well-functioning and well-oiled society because, at the end of the day, this concept of "let me see what I can get out of it for myself" has to be replaced and we have to recognise that we have a responsibility to each other, not to try and steal time or any other commodity and that the stealing of time is as equally as heinous as the stealing of a particular good, service or money. Sir, this brings me to the next point which is the incidence of sick leave in the public service.

Mr. Speaker, when persons get sick, they must have the time home appropriately to recover such that they can do their job well when they return but when there are instances where people have been on sick leave for in excess of 100 days per year, 150 days per year, 200 days per year, then those persons ought appropriately to see the medical board and be determined as to whether they are in truth fit to continue working in the particular job.

Sir, I cannot blame the individual who sends in the sick certificate for the time but what I have to wonder is whether their superior officer is ensuring that person gets the appropriate medical attention and whether a determination is being made that the interest of the individual ought to be balanced with the interest of the organisation. There has to be a determination as to whether the individual or organisation is not suffering. Hence, a decision has to be made as to whether that person can appropriately continue in that job. Sir, the incidence of sick leave across almost every Government department is alarmingly high and unacceptable; not because we do not accept that persons are sick but if they are for so long a period of time, then one wonders whether they are capable of doing the job or whether there is an element of malingering that ought to be stamped out.

Sir, I believe that within the next year that if we do nothing else, we have to deal with the issue of the levels of sick leave within the Government. Do you know why it is important? Sir, particularly in the essential services, when a person calls in sick, a replacement must be found. We are then paying that person who is sick and also the replacement and then what happens is that Government continues to spend inordinately more than it should be spending on what is already a high wages bill in the context of the public sector.

Sir, our wages bill ranks about 41 per cent overall of Government's Current and Capital Expenditure; and that is high. It is not necessarily excessive but it is high and we therefore have a responsibility if we are in charge of a department to ensure that we take into account both the individual's welfare because if they are genuinely sick they must be given the opportunity to receive the best quality health care and if they are not genuinely sick, then they must be reminded of their obligations as employees of the Public Service of Barbados.

Sir, I do not know of any private sector organisation that would allow persons to be sick far in excess of 200 days and not inquire either into the welfare of that individual or into the state of the business, given the financial and other consequences that flow from it.

I am reminded, Sir, for the purpose of accuracy, that the only persons who still benefit from leave passages are persons who have been employed before the 1980's and are still in the service. Sir, but the reality is that they still do it.

Mr. Speaker, part and parcel of the issue before us is whether or not persons who are employed by the public service should be involved in political activities. Mr. Speaker, this is a matter that has received much debate in Barbados. There are some people who feel that simply being a public servant should not preclude you from involvement in political activity and there are others who feel that political activity does not and is not a bad thing; that people should be allowed to participate in political activities particularly where they are in a job that is not sensitive in the context of Government. It is significant that the United Kingdom has treated this issue by defining jobs that are politically sensitive and those that are not. Indeed, Sir, senior public servants, for the most part, fall into the category of politically restricted; they cannot become involved in active politics. Then there are categories of public servants below a certain level who are categorized as politically free. Other jurisdictions do not have that hybrid situation but like us have either an absolute prohibition and in very few, some of them allow political activity.

Sir, I believe this is a matter that requires the greatest possible reflection. I believe there are certain categories of public servants that can, in fact, be engaged in political activities but we have to recognize that there are other categories that should not be involved in open political canvassing since their requirement, as it relates to their job, may require them being in a position to give sensitive advice or, indeed, require political neutrality in respect of them.

Sir, I do not see anything wrong – and I hope I will never come to regret this – with a teacher being a politician but the teacher must ultimately retire from the service if he

or she is going to accept a post as part of the executive. I do not see anything wrong with someone from the Sanitation Service Authority, neither with certain middle- or low-level posts in terms of relative decision making within the public service, with persons from those ranks being allowed to participate in partisan political activity but Sir, I would have a difficulty with a permanent secretary or with senior police officers, or senior members of the Barbados Defence Force, or with persons generally who are in sensitive positions and have to advise Ministers on an ongoing basis. Therefore there must be that element of trust irrespective of which Minister or which Party is in office.
12.35 p.m.

I believe, Sir, that before Government settles on a position in this matter, it is going to require the greatest possible reflection and, indeed, recognition that a one-off solution cannot be found for this. What would properly be required is a clear and particular examination of all posts at all levels, such as to ensure that we do not compromise the integrity of the public service or indeed the quality of its performance as it relates to the governance of this country.

I therefore, Sir, look forward to hearing the honest views of Members of this Chamber and the other Chamber, as it relates to this issue of political activity of public servants. In the area of training, you know that we have been talking about the need for education and training for all members of this society. We have a system of training within the public service that does not necessarily reflect the strategic priorities of the Government, nor indeed the imperatives of succession planning, nor indeed, Mr. Speaker, the need when a person has been trained, that they ought properly to be allowed to use that training in the department in which that training can be utilised.

There are still too many instances, in my view, of persons having received a specialised form of training and then being transferred in less than a year to a department where that training cannot be utilised. It is a waste of Government funds. We are a small society with limited resources and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have a duty to ensure that when a person receives training:

1. That training accords with the strategic needs of Government and not only the personal ambitions of the particular person.
2. That having received that training, they have the opportunity to let the Government benefit from the training received.

I further believe, Mr. Speaker, it is unfair that a person can come back from training in one year, and within a year

or two, be back on a training programme again, ensuring once again that Government does not receive the full benefit of the investment made in their training.

I feel that clear protocol should be developed and strictly adhered to which sets out how much time a person must work in the particular area of their training, before either being:

1. Transferred, or
2. Being allowed to go off for additional training unless it is a matter of national strategic importance that person should be exposed to a further level of training for the benefit of the country.

I further believe, Mr. Speaker, that this nonsense of feeling that leaders will evolve or that people will stumble into leadership positions in the public service has to be reviewed. Every department ought to have a clear, transparent framework for succession planning.

One of the things that I did before I left the Ministry of Education, Mr. Speaker, Sir, was to approve in principle, a framework that was recommended by the public servants there, recognising that unless there is a clear framework for succession planning, people will not feel that there is any transparency and people will feel hard done by the process, even if it is transparent and even if people are given an opportunity to apply.

I believe that from the time you enter the Fire Service, the teaching service, the general public service, you should know what is the framework available in order for you to benefit if you believe that you are a person who has leadership skills and leadership potential and therefore you want to be given an opportunity to be considered since that is the most you can get, because at the end of the day it must be based on merit. There is nothing wrong with a person feeling that he or she should undergo a period of training such that they can be considered in the context of succession planning.

Sir, succession planning in some instances requires coordination both at the levels of the Training Committee as well as the National Development scholarships. In some areas, there is specialised knowledge which must be obtained in order for the person to be able to lead a particular department.

I regret, Sir, that in too many of our departments we have circumstances of the Chief and Deputy Chief retiring within the same year. Unfortunately, Sir, I will face that predicament in the Fire Service this year when the Chief Fire Officer and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer will retire

within weeks of one another so that cannot be right or sensible. I therefore hope that in the future we would be able to remove these aberrations from the public service, if we are to get the utmost efficiency from the service.

On the issue, Mr. Speaker, of the Constitutional Amendments of 1974, I want to say this, Sir, I respect the views of the Committee, I respect also the views of the Constitutional Review Commission but I disagree with them because I believe honestly that in a society our size, we cannot institutionalise those things that will lead either to gridlock or a failure for someone ultimately to be accountable.

Mr. Speaker, one of the unfortunate things that attaches to us in the post-independence era of the Caribbean in particular, is that we doubt ourselves on many things and it is unfortunate. Doubt, very often is the first ingredient to failure and when we truly consider the arrangements that are in place in almost every other developed country of the world, there is political accountability for many of the appointments that we now want to sterilise and put into the hands of persons who are not accountable to the electorate.

I do not believe that is the road we should pursue. I am cognisant, Sir, that the views of a previous Barbados Labour Party Administration were otherwise but at that time, I had not even sat the Common Entrance Examination. I believe that the experience of 35 years of Independence and the absence of abuse that we have seen in the 27 years since the then Prime Minister, the late Errol Walton Barrow, piloted those measures through these Chambers, is all the more reason why we should stop doubting ourselves.

In a small democracy there must be someone who is ultimately accountable and capable of making a decision. I believe, Sir, that the mere fact that we have invested confidence in a person designated as Prime Minister we should not now so seek to deny that person the capacity and the ability to govern in a way that he or she has articulated to the public of this country. Sir, if the public is in disagreement, the public has the capacity to review the confidence expressed in that person.

Sir, when we vest these powers in bodies that are not reviewable by the average man or woman in this country, then they become sterilised and isolated from the views of the ordinary man and woman. I am not in anyway advocating the governance by popular opinion but by the same token, Mr. Speaker, I prefer to err with Sir Arthur Lewis, who was quoted in Professor Albert Fiadjoe's book, "*Public Law in the Caribbean*", as recognising as far back as the 1970's that small societies such as ours cannot afford to have gridlock affect them by denuding the power of political persons.

I believe, Sir, that when we sit down and study what happens in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and other Western European countries and in other Commonwealth countries, very often powers are vested in the political directorate that we would wish to vest in this part of the world in persons who are not elected. I, Sir, would wish to err with the views of Sir Arthur Lewis, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, former Prime Minister of Barbados, and others who felt and recognised that you cannot have that kind of gridlock affecting the governance of these small societies.

12.45 p.m.

I also believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is a question of what tone we set for ourselves. It is necessary for us to have a means of resolving any abuse when it does take place, but I submit that in the history of this country's modern development such abuses have been few if ever and in the circumstances I would wish to continue to believe that those who go forward and take on the night dew and knock on the doors and who reflect that they would wish to represent the people of this country should be those who should ultimately be accountable.

This is no different from the assertion of parliamentary sovereignty that this Parliament expressed in the 17th century when it refused to accept the will of those at that time who overthrew the royalists. It is no different from the assertion of this Parliament in the late 19th century when the British Government tried to impose upon the people throughout the Caribbean the process of the Crown Colony government and this Parliament asserted its right to be independent.

I believe that while we may have to review some structures as to the structure of the Parliament and as to the balance between the Executive, the Back Bench and the Opposition so as not to have purely all the time what may properly be said to be executive style government and that there is not a case for reversing the 1974 constitutional amendments and for stripping the powers of the Prime Minister as it relates to the appointment either of the judiciary or of temporary staff in the public service.

The reality is that some people may want to feel that politics is a dirty game but I prefer to feel that it is a noble vocation and that the one thing that would assure us the future of not having to deal with abuses is the quality of persons and the commitment of persons who enter public life in this country.

I want to say that I believe we have been fortunate today, just as I believe we have been fortunate in the public service, but I recognise that those days are under threat because too many people want to sit back and comment without coming forward and putting themselves on the line

in terms of political life and in terms of the public service. Too many people have so many other options for employment that they feel that they do not want to be in what was once styled the "army of occupation" or indeed as it was described as "asbestos" as was once done by the same Right Honourable gentleman whom I quoted just now.

I believe that both forms of public service, however, are noble forms, whether by way of election or whether by way of appointment and in the circumstances I believe that it is our duty to ensure that legacy which was so well honed such that we could inherit it today should be one that we should seek to ensure that we can pass on to future generations. It will require some treating, some revisions and some reforms in the system. We need to strive for transparency, for certainty, for simplicity and for fairness in the system as it relates to hiring, promotion and the disciplining of persons in the service.

Equally, I believe that there should be one common shared objective as to where we want to take this country such that all, not only those in the public service but indeed all Barbadians, are capable of buying in to that vision and to recognise that each individual has a critical role to play if we are to reach those stated objectives in respect of where we want to go. It is in that spirit that I look forward to the strategic plan which hopefully would be completed this year such that people can see where they fit into the scheme of things and how by working together we can boost the prosperity of the whole of the country but equally individual members of this country so that each person would feel that he or she has an appropriate stake and particularly so in a public service which is pivotal to our being able to achieve those objectives.

As I said earlier, we cannot be speaking about creating a new economy and we cannot be speaking about improving the delivery of social services or even indeed about changing the way in which our foreign policy moves forward without recognising that those persons who are charged with the responsibility of implementing Government's programmes, policies and, indeed, priorities are as well equipped as they could possibly be, and in ensuring that they are as well equipped as they could possibly be so that they feel a sense of pride and commitment to the task which they accept; and the arrangements which surround their terms of conditions should be appropriate.

I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I may not be very popular among my colleagues, but I genuinely feel as well that public servants, Ministers and Members of Parliament have also to be remunerated better. It may well require from us a serious revision as to how we do things because, once

again, Lee Quan Yu said that when power is invested in men and women who cannot live on their salaries there is an invitation to misuse that power. We have, therefore, realistically, to discuss these issues and to ensure that we remove all temptations from all those who feel that it is their right to step outside of their legitimate terms and conditions to enhance their salaries. I think that discussing this matter does not mean commitment but simply reflecting on how best we can treat to the issue because we should be able to attract the very best both in the public service as well as into political life.

I also believe that we may have to look at a system which is attractive to persons, particularly in the technical fields, to be able to come and spend 10 or 15 years in the government service whether at the beginning of their career or at the end of their career to deliver specialised knowledge and then to allow them to go. We may have to look at some form of approved pension rights or at other incentives to get the best quality people back into the public service, whether it is giving them, for example, access to lower interest rates through agencies such as the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation or whether it is through giving them access to lower interest rates in the Student Revolving Loan Fund or those other things which constitute the necessary expenditure on the part of a person such that there is a set of preferred benefits for anybody who is engaged as a public servant in the employ of Barbados, so that in those circumstances, we become a competitive employer and for persons a question of first choice when asked where they want to work. These are the things that may have to move in discussion because we have reached a stage where other alternative forms of employment can now be so attractive that persons question whether they should work in the structure of the public service, and if they do, whether they would want to do so for their entire working life.

I believe that we will do well to discuss these things and I look forward to that kind of creative approach as to how best to staff the public service of Barbados and at the same time seek to review the legal and administrative arrangements which will govern the public service in the early part of the 21st century. I believe that Government has shown its commitment in bringing this matter to this stage and that while we have done much to improve the terms and conditions of the public servants over the last seven years, the most important of which was the conversion of casual employees to public officers, such that their gratuities and pensions were virtually doubled overnight with that single decision. Other things such as ensuring that a person acting in a post for three years can now retire at that higher level without having to be appointed to that post. There have been a whole range of improvements in the terms and conditions of service: flexibility allowances for nurses, police and prison officers.

12.55 p.m.

While all of that is happening, Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to review the whole and it is significant that as it relates to that, we have already started the process of job evaluation such that Phase 1 is completed and Phase 2 where we actually look at the relativity of the various jobs in the public service started in November last year and it is envisaged that exercise will take some 18 months finishing sometime in 2003. It will be the first comprehensive evaluation of all posts in the public service in Barbados in modern Barbados. The last job classification exercise on the admission of those who took it out was not a comprehensive job evaluation exercise. That took place in 1989 and we all know, Mr. Speaker, the complaints as to those at the top carrying home a wheelbarrow full of money and those at the bottom standing and watching as the wheelbarrow walked outside the doors.

Before that, Sir, there had not been an evaluation exercise since 1975 and before that, Sir, there was the provision which obtained between 1946 and the late 1960s where there was a five-year review of those salaries as well as job evaluation led then by Grantley Adams in 1946.

This Government has been serious about its commitment to evaluate comprehensively every job in the public service and when that Report is completed next year we trust and anticipate that we can bring about a greater level of equity in terms of relativity in jobs within the public service of Barbados. We have also, as I said, by the establishment of this Committee by its going to the public of Barbados and by our now coming to the representatives of the people in the Parliament of Barbados and removing the whip to get the views and constructive engagement of individual Members of both Houses, we have ensured that we could be as comprehensive in this process because we understand the pivotal and critical importance of the public service to the governance of this country.

I trust, Mr. Speaker, that all Honourable Members here today will take the opportunity to have their say because it is not settled Government policy at this stage. We will have a chance as a Government to sign off and constitute what will be our recommendations to inform the drafting of a new Public Service Act. As I get ready to sit, Sir, I simply say that that can only be seen as one part of the task for we cannot legislate a work ethic nor can we legislate cultural change nor can we legislate high positive values that rid this society of corruption, whether petty or major. Therefore, there must be a concomitant approach set by the Government but reinforced by all elements of civil society that these are the objectives that must drive the actual execution of work and, as I said earlier, quoting the President of Singapore, while we recognise that we need new attitudes that we must also know that pay must accord ultimately with performance and accountability and not simply with presence and hours spent.

I believe that if we adhere to simple precepts of transparency, honesty, simplicity and fairness that we would do well in the transition exercise of which we are embarked to ensure that the previously held reputation of integrity and efficiency that has been associated with the Barbados Public Service can also be associated with it as we move into the early 21st century. I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the House's permission, before the Suspension is called we would now like to recommit to Messages from His Excellency, the Governor-General and Government Notices.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER: His Excellency, the Governor-General to the Honourable the House of Assembly.

"His Excellency the Governor General has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that he will be absent from the country during the period February 10 to February 12, 2002 on a private visit to Miami.

His Excellency further has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that in accordance with the provisions of section 29(1)(c) of the Constitution His Honour Sir Fred W. Gollop, K.A., President of the Senate has been appointed as Acting Governor-General for the period February 10-12, 2002."

Signed: SIR CLIFFORD HUSBANDS
Governor-General

Dated: February, 2002.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Report of the Urban Development Commission for the year 1998-99.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.15 p.m. today.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I beg to second that.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.15 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.
1.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Honourable House is resumed.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution to this debate on the Report of a committee established to advise on the policy framework for a new Public Service Act.

This debate is an important one at this point in our development and I believe it is not so much a debate about the public sector as an aggregation of departments within Government but it is also a debate about our system of governance. The public sector is often not recognised. Indeed, it is always taken for granted in societies which are well governed. One notes the importance of the public sector, however, in those societies which suffer from the absence of an effective functioning public sector. We can look at countries near and far. If we look at our neighbour, Haiti, in which there have been several attempts for the national community to support them in their efforts in strengthening their democracy and returning to a normal path of growth and development, you will notice weaknesses in the public sector. We can also look at Afghanistan which has over the last 20 years been ravished by wars of one kind or another and has been unable to afford to pay its public sector for years. We can look around the world and we will notice that in countries where there is a notable absence of an effective public sector that economic, social and political development is thwarted.

I see the public sector as an important aspect of our institutional arrangement. Indeed, the will of the executive three arms of our system of Government is executed by the public sector. At the start of my contribution to this debate I want to salute those public servants, present and past, who have contributed to the national development of Barbados. It is much to our credit, notwithstanding the structural deficiencies which we have inherited as part of this system because several of the premises on which we have based the structure of our public sector are indeed flawed but I will get to that later. Notwithstanding that, we in Barbados have been able to boast about the public sector in which the people of Barbados generally have great confidence.

We have been able as well to have a system where there has to be an ongoing working relationship between politicians as representatives of the people and public officers as employees of the State. I want to say this Administration has been very mindful of the important role of the public sector and since coming to office in 1994 has been committed in thought, word and deed to improving the lot of public officers in Barbados.

Our process of public sector reform of which this is a part has been very instrumental in improving the quality of

service and the conditions under which public officers work. There is still some distance to go but we have made many steps in the right direction.

Sir, the reality is that the system that we employ by way of management of the public sector and by way of its structure is part of that system of governance which we would have inherited from our colonial masters and the structure and outlook of the public sector necessarily reflect the nature and the character of the society from which it is drawn.

Sir, the reality is that time and time again, as we saw in the 1974 debate on the constitutional amendment, as we saw in the debate on the Report of the Constitutional Review Commission, there is always this question as to the extent of the notion of an independent, non-political public sector reporting to someone other than the people's representatives or as is done in the United States of America where the Cabinet level persons are allowed a greater involvement in the administrative and other affairs of departments in which they have responsibility.

Sir, it is my view that it is a fundamental tenet of democracy and at the end of the day, all that the Government actually does is ultimately reviewable by the citizens of our country. It is important to ensure that we have a public sector which is free from the negative aspects of political involvement and it is also necessary to recognise that you cannot ask the people's representatives to be responsible for Ministries and all that happens by way of the outcome but not have the opportunity to influence the ultimate direction of that outcome.

Therefore, when we are put in a position where we have the question debated as to the power of the Prime Minister to make certain appointments to the public sector, when we have questions as to the Ministers versus the Permanent Secretaries, it is important to note that the public has the right of recall for a Prime Minister, Minister and Members of Parliament at the end of the day, if they are dissatisfied with the performance of these individuals. They have a mechanism by way of the ballot to say they are displeased with the performance and will replace them but there is no such mechanism with the permanently appointed officers in our public sector.

Therefore, it is important for us to preserve democracy in its truest and fairest form to have that linkage where the people's representatives continue to be able to directly influence what happens in the public sector. It is what separates true democracy and democratic governance from the dictatorship of the bureaucracy, this is really where the line is drawn.

Sir, we are fortunate in Barbados that there has been a national consensus and approach to these matters such that the citizens of this country have been able to influence the policy direction of the country by way of the vote while also ensuring that there is not a level of political interference in the administration of the public sector such as would draw it into disrepute.

Sir, I want to comment on the recommendations of this Report against the background of a number of things. First of all, the Government's track record in dealing with matters in relation to the Civil Service. I also want to deal with the matter of new modes of management which will be required to take us into the future especially against the background of the social partnership as another aspect of our arrangement for governance of this society which we have evolved and also, Sir, the matter of the critical role which public sector management plays in helping us to achieve the competitiveness to which we strive as a nation.

The matter of accountability has been addressed but there continues to be a number of structural weaknesses and loopholes in the legislation governing the public sector which makes it extremely unclear as to how people should interpret their roles and how we should call to account persons in the public sector who do not fulfill their roles. Sir, at the end of the day, the public must be made to feel that those servants of the people who are employed at all levels of the Government, not only on the political level where there is that accountability but also within the establishment, are able to get redress for poor service or the inordinate delays in getting the services which are being offered by Government, *et cetera*. I therefore support the recommendation of the Report for a tidier Code of Discipline which would ensure that good workers are able to be rewarded for their efforts and those who fall short of the mark will be able to reap the fruits of the lack of their labour. 2.25 p.m.

Sir, on this matter of the management of the public sector, I must reflect that the intentions of the Administration of the Barbados Labour Party are not always necessarily reflected in the day by day functioning of the public sector bureaucracy. Take for example the matter of the social partnership to which this Government is committed; one of the fundamental underpinnings of the social partnership is the matter of consultation on major social and economic matters. Another fundamental component is the matter of the consultation with workers' representatives and adopting a more democratic form of governance within the management of the organisations in the public sector. Sir, as part of our responsibility, it must fall to us to ensure that all public sector managers recognise that they cannot rule their individual departments as if they are mini kingdoms and as if they are the kings. We sometimes have situations in some Government departments where the Permanent Secretaries,

as heads of departments, discharge their responsibilities legitimately but there are other cases where, by estimation, the boundaries are being overstepped; where officers are made to feel as if they dare not question decisions that are made and that they dare not make an input in the administration of those departments.

Sir, I would want to say to the public that is not part of the approach to management which this Administration supports in the public sector. We believe that the talent of the 35 000-plus employees in the Government sector of Barbados is worthy of being utilized and that it does not fall only to us as a Cabinet or to the approximately 25 Permanent Secretaries to be the sole brains or generators within this Government. In fact, as we go forward into the future, it will become essential for a greater emphasis to be placed on human resource management as is recommended in the Report. In a system as large and as complex as ours – I believe that there are some 51 departments and agencies within Government – the management of people becomes just as important as the management of systems. Sir, every public officer must be confident that on entering the service, he or she will be given every opportunity to develop fully their skills, talents, that they will not be robbed of promotional opportunities, that they will have an equal opportunity to rise to the top. Therefore, part of the new responsibilities of management within the public sector will be to ensure that such a plan is in place.

Sir, part of this Administration's approach, not only to achieve this objective but also to encourage persons to continue to come into the public sector was to recognize that the terms and conditions under which every public officer works needed to be improved. I am pleased to note that in the figures for 1994 to 1995, public sector wages have increased by approximately 23 per cent. Therefore the average worker in the public sector is taking home a pay packet 23 per cent larger than it was 1994 to 1995.

In addition to that, the Government has also increased its overall expenditure on wages and salaries by way of filling some of the vacancies such as had existed. There were a number of critical areas for which there was a shortage of persons to man positions and the Government has been able to fill them. In fact, the total wage bill of the Government has moved from \$396 million to \$630.8 million in 2001 to 2002, so that the Government has spared no expense both by way of total expenditure on wages and salaries for public officers but also by way of the individual packaging constituting that total which has risen by 23 per cent. Sir, for example: Z38 – Maids moved from \$13 370.68 per year to \$16 628.40 in this current financial year. As you know, Sir, negotiations are about to commence and who knows where that will go. Sir, a clerical officer at the bottom of the salary scale would be in the region of \$13 370.00 to \$16 000.00, those at the top would have moved from \$20 579.99 to \$29 114.00, Permanent Secretaries, from \$74 000 to \$91 000.

Sir, I want to remind this Parliament that Government has recognised that it could not count on the long-term commitment and support in the public sector to hard work and service to the public if its own situation reflected one of uncertainty. Sir, can you imagine that casual workers, for example, road weeders at MTW, persons fixing potholes, doing drainage work and making other vital contribution to the infrastructure of this country, so defined in the past, could have been casual workers for thirty years? They would have started work around age 20 and on retirement many years later would leave as casual workers. One who throughout his working life would have been subject to be given one day's notice by a Permanent Secretary and told that he is being dismissed. He would not have been given any letter to take to the United States Embassy to obtain a visa for a visit to the United States, or to be able to take a letter to a bank to do any kind of improvements to his home. This Government, recognising that the national interest and people's personal interest have to coincide if we are to get the best out of our social arrangement, converted the post of over 4 000 public workers who were casual or temporary workers to that of being permanent and they can count on the longevity of the employment and a pension that comes at the end of that employment to improve their personal circumstances.

In addition to that, Sir, improved terms and conditions have also been provided in a number of areas. There has been an increase in the level of the loans made available for motor vehicles.
2.35 p.m.

There has been increased travelling allowance paid to officers, both a fixed travel allowance and the travel allowance as paid per kilometre of travel. There has been more study leave granted. There have been greater allocations to the training vote and there have, therefore, Sir, been more opportunities provided for personal growth and development and for financial stability, and for people to feel that they have a stake in this country as public servants than ever before in our history and, Sir, that has been the tangible commitment of this Administration to the improvement of the public sector.

I will not recite a long list of the projects which have been undertaken as part of public sector reform in Barbados. I am sure other speakers will do that but I want perhaps more, Sir, to look to the future to see what is required of the public sector of Barbados now that we have gone some substantial distance towards improving the terms and conditions, security of tenure, the physical surroundings in which they operate and things of that sort.

Sir, the Government plays a substantial role both by way of public policy and the provision of services in the competitiveness of our country. At the end of the day, if we

do not earn our way in the world, if we do not earn foreign exchange, if we do not provide jobs for our people, if we do not have economic activity to stimulate the flow of money around the country, we will not be able to do anything for the public servants or for anybody else for that matter.

The public sector as an institution must therefore so structure itself and so deliver its goods and services that it becomes an aid towards competitiveness, rather than a drag on the efforts of the rest of the society to be competitive. What do I mean by that, Sir? It is known that at the end of the day the level of efficiency in Government has a direct impact on the cost of doing business. It has an impact on the investment decisions that people make or do not make for that matter, it has an impact on the outlook on the society as far as the levels of service, and the Government can lead by example in this regard, and it also has an impact on productivity.

Imagine, Sir, if you are a small business and you have to go every day from Government department to Government department, filling out forms and taking them here and there. What time will you have to deal with the core aspects of your business? We intend to take a look at all of the key departments of Government, particularly as they impact directly on people, whether they are people in business or individuals accessing social services, to ensure that this "merry-go-round", this filling out of forms and form dropping, going here and there, which has been an unfortunate characteristic of the provision of services in the public sector over the years, must be a thing of the past.

In the same way, Sir, that the telephone, the fax machine and now the Internet have altered people's expectations as far as turn-around time is concerned, so it is with the Government as well. It cannot be a good example for the Government to use inordinate power in our social arrangements, for the Government departments to believe that because they are part of the Government, that they do not have an obligation to consider people's time, the cost of that time to individuals and the negative impact which unnecessary bureaucracy can have on business in our country.

The reality is, Sir, that when we compete, we are not competing with the poorest countries in the world or the worst off in the world and therefore we should not take our examples from them. It matters not, Sir, if it takes ten days for mail to travel to some remote country in the world. What matters is how long it takes to travel to our trading partners in the countries from which we get our investment and in the countries from which our people have adopted their expectations.

Our public sector has to compete by way of efficiency and an entrepreneurial approach to the services they offer

and the structures they adopt with the public sector of the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Japan and those countries with which we are in direct competition for international business investment: the offshore sector, the tourism sector, the manufacturing sector and even the agricultural sector.

Those are the countries as well, Sir, with which we compete for our intellectual property. Those are the people who write software, write songs, produce music and other artistic works. We therefore have to create a vision for the public sector of Barbados that is driven by the reality of the fact that we are competing with those countries and, therefore, we have to be faster and smarter by way of our arrangements.

Sir, whether it is the Customs Department, the Corporate Registry, the Immigration Department, the Treasury Department, the VAT Office or the Licensing Authority, we need to ensure that we move through a process of continuous improvement to a system which will ensure that we could do these essential activities with the minimal loss of time.

There are situations, Sir, in which you go to a Government department and you are told to make inquiries at one desk and you are given a form. You have to take that form over to another desk to pay some money and then you have to take that form over to yet a third desk in order to get the matter fixed. This is a waste of time and people in these days do not have that kind of time to spare.

I want to say, Sir, that these are matters which will be addressed on three fronts. First of all, the Commission on Competitiveness will focus on these national constraints to doing business. They will impact on small and large businesses but the impact is the same: more cost, more frustration, loss of business. They will be addressed as well, Sir, by the development through the public sector reform process of the citizens or customer charters. The Government will ensure that in all of its departments over the process of time, it is able to say to the public, what is a reasonable time by which the action required will be completed.

We must get to the stage, Sir, where the Town Planning Department is able to say to you that when you submit a plan to us, subject to the provision of all the information, we will give you a decision by this date. The Immigration Department currently is able to tell you, at least with respect to passport applications and renewals, what time frame within which you will get it and that time frame of course needs to be shortened.

In all the departments, Sir, citizens must know with certainty that there is a time frame within which decisions

will be made and within which replies will be obtained. The greatest frustration which citizens experience, and I am sure they experience it in dealing with departments under my control as well, Sir, is in non responses from Government, or in responses that are six months or a year later and with that very sorry line at the bottom of the letter, "the delay in responding is regretted." Sir, you wonder about the sincerity of that line sometimes and that is an aspect of our development and our delivery of public services that I want to see put behind us. Prompt efficient service must be the only watchword.

Sir, I want to salute the Commission which did the work on this particular Report. It is a Report that highlights a number of the issues and makes some recommendations on which different persons will have varying opinions. I want to say, Sir, that the structure of the Commission which undertook this exercise is an indication of an approach to the Government and governance of this society through the public sector which I would want, on behalf of this Administration, to emphasise, that is, Sir, this is a tripartite structure. It reflected persons from the public sector, it reflected representations from the unions of Barbados and it reflected private sector involvement, it reflected academic involvement by way of the university and related institutions. 2.45 p.m.

The modern management of an efficient and effective sector in Barbados and the approach which has been adopted through the social partnership of fullest consultation of joint approaches to these national issues will, I am sure, take us very safely into the future.

I look forward in the not too distant future to being able to participate in a full debate on the Public Service Act because as you would be aware, Sir, this is but a debate on the Report making recommendations.

In closing, I want to say that I endorse the recommendations of the Report with respect to the utilisation of information technology in the provision of government services and that this would go a long way towards alleviating some of the problems I have identified by way of the slow or non-response to the public who require services.

Mr. Speaker, my time is up, therefore, I want to say thanks and congratulations to the Committee which produced the Report and assure the public and the public sector of Barbados of this Administration's continued commitment to follow through in like manner to the very bold manner in which we have responded to their needs for improved terms and conditions of service and other matters affecting them and that together we would work with them and their representatives to reform the public sector for the

good of Barbados, for the good of the workers in the public sector and for our economic, social and political well-being well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to make my contribution to this debate on the Report from the Committee established to advise on a policy framework for a new Public Service Act.

I greatly honour this privilege to be in the House at this time for what I consider to be one of the more important debates that we will have in this Chamber but that importance and the importance of this particular debate really need to be set in a specific context. I am going to try to focus on the philosophy which I believe underpins the establishment and the management of the Civil Service in Barbados and comment, if time permits, on a few aspects specifically of the Report that was produced by the Committee.

Let me say, Sir, by way of commendation, that I acknowledge the tremendous effort that was made by the Committee and congratulate them for an excellent document and for the excellent initiatives and recommendations made to push the process of reform of the Civil Service onto another page.

I commend the Government also for being able to create this consultative process and for actually widening and broadening that consultative process and for giving us all in Parliament, the opportunity without the whip to be a part of that process of consultation as it relates to this new Act.

Sir, we in Barbados owe much to our civil servants for the type and quality of existence that we enjoy as Barbadians. All of us who are in some way linked to the Civil Service and all of us who are not directly linked to it have heard of the massive jokes, complaints and all the other things that people seem to shower and throw at the Civil Service. You live beside a man in the neighbourhood, you do all the things that he does in terms of mowing his lawn, looking after his children, sending them to school and picking them up and because he gets in his car and drives to a job in the public service and you drive to one in the private sector, that automatically makes you a totally different animal than he is in terms of what you do and how efficient and effective you are at your job.

Over the years, people in the Civil Service have endured the brunt of much jokes and complaints because they are civil servants. I must say that in my own experience and even now as a Minister of the Crown that I have had the opportunity to work with some excellent civil servants who

are very committed to the development of this country and who go beyond the call of duty most of the time to ensure that we continue to have the quality of life that we do enjoy in Barbados.

Sir, I have also had the privilege of working both in the public service as a public servant in this job and in the private sector and I must say that there are good elements in both and that there are some good civil servants who go to work every day and make it possible for us to enjoy the standards that we enjoy and who are much better most of the time than many people in the private sector.

In addition to that, the issue of introducing this new Bill by year end, as was commented on by the Attorney General, is an added incentive for us to look very seriously at how we relate to the Civil Service because you can see that this Government is certainly intent upon producing a totally new environment.

As we move into a whole new world of development in a whole new world economy that speaks to issues relating to technological, sociological and physiological changes we must, as Barbadians, be able to meet and compete if we are to move our country to the next level of our development and Barbados needs an efficient public sector to be able to take us to that next stage.

Barbados, at both the level of the private and public sector, needs to behave differently and to act differently in terms of the processes that will move us ahead. Sir, the framework in which we prepare ourselves to meet this new world calls for reform at both the public and private sector level but Government essentially must create that environment that offers opportunities for entrepreneurship and for the private sector to function more efficiently.

Therefore, officers of the Government need to know what is their responsibility within this new framework that gives all citizens of Barbados the opportunity to advance. They need to know how best they can carry out these duties, where their responsibilities are and where their authority extends. Therefore, in that context, it is important that we look at giving them the physical and sociological tools that can move them to achieving this higher goal of sustainable national development. We have an obligation to provide those tools for our civil servants and this is best done within the law and within a reform of the existing Public Service Act.

Therefore, we need to laud Government for the reform measures and mechanisms that they have used already for wider consultation because this is very much in keeping with a Government that is intent and has proven time and time again that it would consult very widely upon the changes that need to be made within this society.
2.55 p.m.

Sir, I have some very personal feelings on the Civil Service and its functioning. I have never actually worked in the Civil Service itself and maybe you can relate this capacity to being a civil servant in some measure; but at the same time, Sir, I have had the privilege of working within a statutory corporation and I know that some people seem to equate the Civil Service with some statutory corporations when it is convenient at times but there is a measure of relationship between the two, and I therefore think that I have a certain measure of experience to be able to speak on the Civil Service.

Sir, much of the focus really lies on this wide body of rules that governs the Civil Service that, seemingly, in my opinion, more restrict than empower people within the Civil Service to do what they set out to do. Sir, some aspects of the Report focus on issues related to disciplinary issues and grievance handling and the like, but I feel that the general focus of any Act that deals with looking at the reform of the Civil Service or any level of reform must focus as well on human resource and personal development which I think is severely lacking within the corridors of Government as it relates to the Civil Service.

I think not of personnel policies and personnel departments but of true human resource departments and true human resource policies that focus on looking at really developing that particular human being not only in a professional context but also in a personal context as a human being. We need to provide activities for both empowerment and for competitiveness for our civil servants.

Sir, I had the privilege when I worked in North America to have been instructed. From the time you walked through the door in a big corporation in North America you were given everything, a manual of conduct, a manual of procedure, everything from the way you dress to the way you speak and do an interview. I think that we need to move to another level where we give our civil servants not only tools to run their jobs in a procedural manner, to deliver on the objectives set out but also to be able to empower them to make them truly competitive *vis-a-vis* the private sector and to give them another opportunity as well to be able to develop themselves personally. I do not think that in the context in which I have seen most of the rules and regulations go down within the Civil Service that we have focussed essentially on building that level of empowerment and competitiveness that moves them to this other level and, in addition to that, being able to give them the basics for personal development.

Sir, there are obviously systems of accountability which must be adhered to but there needs to be some measure of freeing up of this system to be able to give people the authority. To give a man or a woman some level of

responsibility is to make it null and void if you do not give him or her some level of authority to be able to act. Therefore, Sir, in any reform situation what we also need is an ability for these people to be empowered to use some measure of authority. That, I think, has been severely lacking in our system.

I want to send out a word of caution that the Civil Service cannot function like the private sector. I had the opportunity, as I said before, to work in the private sector. There are many that seemingly believe that the Civil Service can be like the private sector, but I want to make it clear that a civil service cannot act like a private sector. Obviously, because of the measure of accountability and the bond that we have in terms of keeping the faith with the entire group and the entire nation and all of our citizens, it is not like an independent company which has an obligation to shareholders and its employees. We are bound too much by what we do in terms of binding an entire nation by our actions and every citizen of our country not to understand the measure of accountability that must exist in the Civil Service *vis-a-vis* the private sector.

At the same time, there is a need as well to be able to free up the system to give these people a measure of authority that they as well can act. Sir, there is a need to ensure that the layers of processes that ensure that accountability are met but at the same time there is need for activities which give empowerment for better efficiency. I think it is possible within a system and I commend some of the recommendations that have been made in that regard.

In addition, Sir, there is obviously the need for the establishment for some specific time guidelines for activities which need to be addressed. I have heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East speak on the issue of approvals for example, approvals or rejections particularly in an environment where you are seeking investment as in international business, in tourism and agriculture. When you are seeking wider investment in Barbados obviously what you are up against is a very competitive environment, particularly from your neighbours, and the concept that is out of place in this environment is that you can keep an investor or anyone waiting for an inordinate length of time, not to speak about all of the people who go to each Government department every day.

There are jurisdictions around us in the context of tourism which when you send for approval to be able to build a hotel property or whatever, give an assurance that this can be done within a certain time frame, for example, a 60 or 90-day window, which some of our neighbours are doing. If you do not get back to the investor within that time, your application is taken as having been approved. Therefore, that is the type of competition that Barbados is up against, particularly in terms of tourism development. If we

want to move our tourism development to that level as well, if we want to get our tourism investment up to that level, it is going to be necessary, not that we throw all caution to the wind and allow anybody and anything to happen but, at the same time, we have to set up some specific guideline and specific time levels in terms of when people can actually bring an investment to Barbados and when they can get it approved.

I am certain that within the context of the reform of the Civil Service we need specific guidelines about time frames for approvals and rejections. Most of the time people are not so much upset by the fact that they are rejected on a particular issue but they want to know, and most of the time we have situations where people never get back, where Government as a body never gets back. These are things that need to be built into any regulations that we approve so that approvals and rejections within the system which speak to issues of competitiveness need to be addressed and there need to be back-up systems as well put in place within the service.

Sir, most of the time you circulate one file, and I have had a situation where somebody lost my file for a car loan and the man told me my file got lost. I do not know how you could lose a file with two papers in it, how you can tell me you lost my file within the system and then hear nobody else touched the file. There needs to be some better measure. Now I have to go back two weeks later and cannot get back the file. The insurance time passed and the man wants to sell the car because he is leaving the island. We cannot afford to buy a new one.

Sir, the point I want to make is that within that system there was not even a system of a back-up file that you could look to. I am not only talking about a technological back-up but there is a need for us to be able to produce resources that allow us to have more than one efficient back-up of a system. This is not backing up files on a computer, but if you have a physical file that is going around an office and that file disappears, do you mean to tell me that I have to start all over again to look for a new file? These are things in terms of back-up systems to the existing systems within the Civil Service that need to be addressed and need to be despatched expeditiously and if there are any additional requirements in terms of application, people need to know. The point I am making is that in this system we need back-up systems that we can effectively rely on. We cannot have this one-based system where you only have one file circulated.

Sir, one of my biggest complaints and pet peeves is that human beings need two measures of things within any working environment and that is recognition and reward. Obviously, Sir, within the Civil Service it seems to me that there are very few mechanisms existing for the concept of

recognising an employee for what he or she is worth and the concept of being able to create a serious basis for reward within a system in the Civil Service.

3.05 p.m.

Sir, in the private sector you are acknowledged for what you do but in the Civil Service you are never recognised for what you do well and any time you make a mistake you are never allowed to forget it. We need to move to a system of recognition of the job, the individual and the task that is performed *vis-a-vis* another task and a reward within that system that allows the individual to know that he is recognised among his peers.

Sir, I make the point that the Civil Service cannot be like the private sector. We need to create mechanisms to address rewards for those who go beyond the call of duty. This must be a fundamental component of any system of reform.

There should also be flexibility with working hours within the public sector and not that a man should work from eight to four o'clock. A man should be able to work eight hours within a 24-hour period. His job should not be essentially tied to some specific time frame but there should be flexibility in that job because more than half the complaints received in the public sector relate to flexibility with working hours; and this needs to be looked at. We need to concentrate on these systems in our concept of recognition and reward.

Sir, if we are able as a Government to address these issues, then we will see petty corruption and the serious problems we face in Barbados both at the level of the private sector and public sector will diminish substantially. One of the problems that leads to a reduction in petty corruption and dishonesty in the public sector has to do with lack of recognition and reward that we are not able to deal with. If we deal effectively with these issues, we will create in Barbados a new and efficient system.

Sir, the public sector should be able to compete on equal levels with the private sector given the tremendous power and skills that exist within that sector. The force of the free market should also assist the public sector to compete equally with the private sector. I do not understand why Government agencies in some aspects are not competing with the private sector for contracts on some jobs even though the resources are being given by Government. Sir, there is a need for that type of spirit to exist in the public sector because the level of professionalism and the capabilities of artisans at the Ministry of Public Works are just as competent as anywhere in the private sector. I do not see why a system cannot be created where these individuals can compete with the private sector for work because this is done successfully in other jurisdictions. We need as a Government to look at alternatives to make the public

sector more efficient and put it on a more competitive basis than it has been in the past.

Sir, there is an aspect that speaks to strengths and weaknesses in the public sector. One of the serious weaknesses that has not been mentioned in the Report is the ineffectiveness of the marketing of the public sector. I do not know of any private sector agency that offers a service on a wide scale that does not seek to market their service. We take it for granted that if you work in the Land Tax Department or the Immigration Department that people will automatically come to these departments so we do nothing at all in terms of marketing that service to the people who use it, even though it is in a monopolistic environment. This will help to shore up the system in terms of creating a better basis for effectiveness and we are not doing a good job at effectively marketing the Civil Service to those who use it on a consistent basis. Sir, we should start to market it effectively to our own citizens.

Sir, I laud the Government in terms of what they have done so far in terms of public sector reform but I believe there needs also to be a wider level of independent consultation with experts in relation to the Civil Service.

Mr. Speaker, I also laud the Government in terms of security of tenure being one of the major planks on which everything else is focussed. I commend Government on the efforts to convert the 4 000 casual workers to public officers. This gives workers an opportunity to be assured of employment. It also means the protection of wages and the psychological benefit that will come to them by opening up a whole new world in terms of security of tenure. Sir, there is also the need to tell those people the responsibilities that come with the assurance of that employment. Many times we convey the wrong idea and we need to let the 4 000 casual workers know that the job comes with a serious responsibility to all of us as citizens in terms of being able to be effective and being conscientious on the job. I think, Sir, that a lot of time we focus on the issue of ensuring people of this without focussing as well on the issues of telling them about the awesome responsibility that is also placed on their shoulders.
3.15 p.m.

One of the other issues is the concept of job evaluation. I believe there needs to be a review of all tasks within the system and it needs to be ongoing. Technological changes are taking place at a much faster rate for us to be lulled in a sense into having people within a task frame within a decade or so. We need constantly as a matter of urgency to be able to review all positions within the system on an ongoing basis.

Sir, on the issue that I spoke about earlier, when I worked in North America, I was given a procedural manual

about everything that you were required to do in the organization. From the day that you walked in, you knew that you were a clerk, manager or whatever and you knew what you needed to do to be effective in that particular position. I feel, Sir, that these things need to be written down. I was reading somewhere in the Report that a lot of tasks are not written down. I believe, Sir, that it is time that we record standards of procedures for all employees at all levels in the system. That is the only way in which we can seriously get moving to another level of effectiveness.

I laud the efforts that were made in terms of the performance management system and the concept of strategic planning. On the issue of strategic planning, I want to say that this is not a management exercise. Strategic planning has got to become a way of life within the Civil Service. I think that too many people believe that we should make out a Report and put it in the drawer. Strategic planning, as I understand it, has to be an ongoing process. It is not a simple management exercise but a serious way of life for us in the Civil Service if we are to move forward.

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

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, I thought that I had more time but I want to say this by way of closing. I want to commend the committee for what they have done. In addition to that, I want to commend the Government for what they have been doing in terms of being able to create for us the basis on which we will build the new economy and that obviously is the reform of the Civil Service. I want to commend those who sat on the committee and for their Report.

Sir, we are going to prove that the Civil Service does not have to be a gigantic inefficient bureaucracy. It can govern in the true sense of the word by being able to tap into the tremendous power of the entrepreneurial process and the free market. We can prove as a Government that enterprising and innovative changes can be made to the system to produce for us the best Civil Service that there is.

Sir, I want to commend the civil servants for their outstanding service that they have done over the years and to say that I am proud to say that this Government is moving in the right direction. That is why I am proud to be over here with this Government.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I read this Report of the committee that was established to advise on a policy framework for the new Public Service

Act, my initial reaction was that the Report states that there is an employer called Government and Government's rules and regulations are entitled to be treated with the same respect as other employers in Barbados would be treated. I saw the Report as really and truly a modern proposal for better management of the Civil Service. The framework is now on the table and out of this a Bill will be drafted. It is now therefore merely at the level of a policy document.

The Report draws very heavily from the General Orders. Indeed, Sir, many aspects of the General Orders are to be included when the time comes in the proposed Bill. The point has to be made very early that the proposed Act will be a lot stronger than the General Orders since the General Orders are just what we call subsidiary legislation.

I do not consider this Report to be anti-civil servant at all, not when I read it. Indeed, Sir, I see it as being very pro-civil servant.

The framework however, Sir, stresses the whole question of accountability and it stresses your obligation as an employee of Government. It is simply saying, Sir, that in this day and age you have to be more professional as a civil servant and we have to stop seeing the Civil Service as an easy cop out. Too many people see it that way, Sir, but we have to see it as an area in which people can be, and indeed they are, quite professional.

Sir, I see this very early because I know that in some quarters there will be those who would want to say that what we are doing is a way to get at civil servants and good civil servants, Mr. Speaker, should never see it in that way. They should see it as a way of improving the Civil Service. What we have done in this policy document is to take what was truly the best from the General Orders and we have attempted to mirror best practices in the document.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are some deviations from the General Orders but what is being proposed is not at all revolutionary or earth shattering. Indeed, it is more evolutionary than it is a revolutionary document. We have looked and have taken as we went on what we thought was the best and we have come up with this document. It cements the existing framework of those good things in the General Orders. It really and truly, Sir, consolidates a lot of what presently happens in the Civil Service. Obviously, those members of the committee who sat in those numerous meetings would have taken this as an occasion to clear up a lot of grey areas in the General Orders as well.
3.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, this is now a statement of practice; it is in preparation in bringing the law in line with the best practice of the day. Sir, in any employer/employee relationship, there

are going to be differences. In any codification of our laws, there has to be a disciplinary section and this proposed Public Service Bill, 2002, is no different and will therefore place heavy emphasis on the question of discipline. The framework speaks to the development of a Code of Conduct and a Code of Discipline and indeed that Code of Discipline actually categorises the offences into both major and minor offences.

The major offences include: criminal conviction, consumption or distribution of any alcoholic beverages while on duty, the use and/or distribution of illegal narcotics while on duty, reporting for and performing duties while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, failure to observe any laws, orders, rules or regulations that ought to have been observed, falsification of accounts or records, wilful mutilation, alteration or destruction of property, threatening a fellow officer or person or property, carrying an unauthorized firearm or other device that can be considered a weapon, acceptance of bribes, dishonesty, engaging in political activities, *et cetera*.

Sir, the minor offences are: use of obscene language, malingering on duty, failure to maintain official records, unpunctuality. It then goes on to explain that three of those minor ones will be treated like a major offence. Therefore, Sir, it is not surprising to me that it is dealt in this way and they have taken the time out to distinguish between the ones that are very serious and the ones that are treated as minor offences.

Sir, before going any further, I have to say that irrespective of whatever form this takes; whether it be treated as a handbook, the General Orders, or an Act, it is not going to make any difference to some civil servants. It matters not what form it takes because a large number of civil servants will not read the law when it comes out as law. A lot of civil servants do not read the General Orders as they come out; and this is a fact. Sometimes they do not know the legal terms. I do not know if it is because of the stiffness of the language, but I find that people tend to ask questions about what impacts on them. They ask questions of their personnel departments. Many persons ask questions about their rights to join a trade union, leave passages, training leave, sick leave, *et cetera*, rather than research them and therefore we are still going to get the situation where many civil servants are not going to read this proposed legislation.

Sir, earlier this morning, as the Honourable Attorney General made her presentation, she made the point that there are some civil servants who have committed breaches of discipline and have been on suspension for virtually an eternity. The point is that people have to wait too long for decisions when it comes to matters of discipline and sometimes matters of health. This suggestion in this Report attempts to reduce the length of time for disciplinary

matters to be heard. This should be a wake-up call for Government itself since a lot of the delays in dealing with disciplinary matters are not the fault of the individuals themselves; it has to do with the machinery of Government. Sometimes it is the scheduling and the cancellations of meetings by entities such as the Public Service Commission, the Medical Board, *et cetera*, which cause a lot of delays and therefore to tell civil servants that the length of time is going to be reduced for disciplinary matters must be met with a corresponding efficiency in dealing with their own matters. Sir, we have put some deadlines in this Report on matters of discipline and are hoping that by doing this, the movement from one desk to another will be much quicker than it now obtains.

Mr. Speaker, it is the same in the law courts. Yes, there is this time frame within which one has to file a defence or a reply so as to avoid delays and clogging up the courts therefore it is a similar thing which is being proposed in this instance. Sir, the question of discipline of the Civil Service still has to be addressed and I will continue making that point. Sir, about two months ago, I was speaking to a retired civil servant and he said that he remembers the times when persons used to have to beg some civil servants, like himself, to go and take lunch; they would work through their lunch time but nowadays, one actually has to beg some of them to go to work. Sir, I believe he is speaking of a small number of civil servants. Basically, the majority of civil servants are of good repute and are good people. They are hard workers but there are a few hard-core workers who, I have to admit, are not necessarily above board. Sir, there are some situations where some of these civil servants are on sick leave and are working other places. There are a few of them who are on sick leave and might be studying at Cave Hill Campus.

Sir, there are too many people who believe that if one is working for Government then he is not working for an employer. People like to associate names to be working for an employer. If persons work for Cave Shepherd & Company Limited, then there is an employer. C. O. Williams, DaCosta Manning, Harris Paints, once a person can identify that business with a person, then there is a boss and therefore an employer, but once one is working for Government then there is no employer.

Sir, I was reading an article which said in a recent study in the United States of America, in which they were trying to ascertain the causes of cardiovascular arrests, *et cetera*, that this study showed that more than 80 per cent of persons between 35 and 60 who die of heart attack do so on a Monday between the hours of 7.00 am and 9.00 am. The reason advanced was that they are stressed out by the thought of having to go somewhere that they did not want to go, namely work. Sir, the article finished by saying that it wished that "a few more of our public servants and general workers would say on Monday mornings, 'thank God, it's Monday!'"

3.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there is the whole question in the policy document about accountability and you can see a chain accountability where you would start virtually with a messenger and you move up to the clerical officer, the stenographer, the senior clerk, right up to the permanent secretary, literally from top to bottom and people being accountable to each other, in a whole reaction chain.

There is the question of the safety and health of those who work in the respective Government offices whereby each Ministry should have things like fire extinguishers and first aid kits. I know this is true having worked in an office as an officer of Government where ventilation was the poorest possible. I experienced that and what is being said here now in this document is that departmental heads are responsible for ensuring that the work environment is safe. Sir, that is a health responsibility but clearly, departmental heads now have that duty, or I hope when the law is passed, to ensure that the environment in which public officers work is safe.

This proposal, Mr. Speaker, also speaks to the transparency of appointment and recruitment. It subscribes to the merit system and it opens the gateway to fast-track, young, competent persons but at the same time it makes it quite clear that experience and acquired skills should always be taken into consideration. Sir, it does pay a lot of attention to things like promotion criteria, such as what criteria you use for promotion and so on and the whole question again of training at all levels. Not necessarily training just at the middle management or the ones on the floor to advance but the manager should not be allowed to think that he has made it to the top and, therefore, there is nowhere else for him to go. Top managers should also be up-to-date.

Mr. Speaker, it is also worth noting that at all of the discussions on this particular Public Service Act or the formulation of the policy document which we are discussing today, that the social partners were involved at the very beginning. Those involved in it up-front or from the formulation of the framework were: the employers, CTUSAB, the full social partnership, the unions, the NUPW. They became, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, the eyes and ears and the mouthpiece of the civil servants.

Mr. Speaker, I fully commend the framers of this document and I fully commend the Commission for the work which they have done. I look forward in anticipation to the shift, the development and the end product of this policy framework when indeed, a new Public Service Act can be realised which I am sure, having read this document, will take Barbados into the 21st Century and obviously beyond.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, this Report of the Committee established to advise on the policy framework for a new Public Service Act, Sir, has not fully done justice to civil society. I start that way, Sir, because at the end of the day, the ultimate beneficiaries of these adjustments should be the general public of Barbados. Sir, my observation of the document in its early stage or background, persons who were involved in the consultation process were Parliamentarians, Members of Cabinet, Chief Personnel Officers, Leaders of the Trade Union Movement and intellectuals.

The public service is also known as the Civil Service and one would expect that civil society would have...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I do not wish the Honourable Member to speak on the wrong premise and in the circumstances he therefore should be aware that the Commission, in fact, advertised for persons to come and give their views at the following locations:

On the 5th October, 1999 at Bethel Auditorium.

On the 12th October, 1999, at Alma Parris Memorial School.

On the 26th October, 1999 at Princess Margaret Secondary School.

The Commission solicited the views of all Barbadians willing to attend and give of those views. Therefore, in the circumstances it would be wrong to say that civil society was not given the opportunity to participate in the consultative process.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I plead ignorance in that regard. I am an honest man so probably the consultations were not as wide as they ought to be and my view is that we are now looking at a new form of governance. They are expanding the democracy in such a way that we cannot afford to wait until decisions are made or until debates are generated from these Chambers, and wait on the reactions of the general public, in order to make the required amendments.

The Civil Service is constituted of more than 25 000 persons in this country. It is the biggest institution in all countries throughout the world. Everything that happens within a society revolves around the rules and regulations of the Civil Service. The Civil Service actually directs the changes in the other institutions of the state and in most cases, the Civil Service does not, in some cases, show resistance to changes from within. These are some of the things that we have to be concerned about and in a modern democracy where we are talking about inclusiveness, I expect broader consultations on these matters.

I believe that the general public and not just the views of those expressed in here today, looking at the Code of Conduct and penalties and so on, there are certain aspects of the malfunctioning of the Civil Service that concerns the general public. While we might be concerned with the smooth running of the bureaucracy, we still have to be looking to see how the functioning of that bureaucracy impacts on the lives of the ordinary men and women in the street.

There is a general view, Sir, that there is a lot of bureaucratic filibustering in the Civil Service over matters that would be resolved in one day or one week in the private sector. This is the general national view, if not at the core of the elite groups in the society, at the level of the masses especially in areas relating to welfare and the social services.

3.45 p.m.

You hear the rumblings among the masses of the people in relation to the manner and the attitude of the Civil Service, but whatever rationale has been given for this exercise, it will only be meaningful if the persons who are making the recommendations for changes empathise with the feeling of the persons who ought to be the major beneficiaries of an efficient and noble service coming from the public service of Barbados.

One sociologist, I think his name was Melbro, said that people who are appointed are not responsible to the people whom they affect. I believe that is instructive and that sometimes civil servants seem to be more concerned with their security of tenure more so than the type of service that they give to the general public of Barbados.

Most politicians do not want to say this, although most of them expressed these fears and concerns behind closed doors, because they find difficulties in dealing with civil servants sometimes. This is not a general indictment on all civil servants but a reasonable percentage of them make it difficult for a new dispensation when they have already given their loyalty or their advice to their predecessors and believe that their advice was correct. So on the arrival of a new dispensation, sometimes there is a lot of difficulty in that administration carrying on the people's mandate. This is what politicians want to say but they would not say it because of the fear of victimisation, the question of where the power lies and who are the power brokers in the governance of this country. Is it the Ministers who are part of this bureaucracy or is it the civil servants?

When Ministers cannot get things done, they point their fingers at senior civil servants and this stem from a myth that seems to be going on in perpetuity in this country that civil servants are non-partisan and there are people who continue

on the premise just as was said and that the hypothesis or the major premise which I advanced not too long ago was incorrect.

I heard a lot about the philosophy that underpins the institution but one of the major planks of that philosophy is that myth itself and for the major institution in a state to continue to function on a myth when all the people in a society, politicians from the Government side and from the Opposition side and those who were not part of this institution already know that all human beings hold a view, if it is not an overt orientation of a particular political party or political interest, there is a latent view, on which particular programme is best for the development of the country in which they live. So everybody is a political entity.

The nonsense in the society itself is that some people want to tell you that they are not political and that when they make decisions they do not have any preference in relation to which political policy is most appropriate. You see it at the post-retirement period when they come out of the woodwork. You see them as senior officers in political parties. You see them during election time walking the streets campaigning for both of the two major political parties and sometimes it becomes so contentious that they cannot restrain themselves and they go then and flaunt their political affiliation on the political platforms; and yet this is not a major issue of concern to any framework.

So we will continue to live a lie if we do not touch the truth and if the society is not mature enough that men can speak the truth in order to change this country's direction for the betterment of all, then we will remain the way we are as strictly agents of the old colonial past with only a change in pigmentation in Parliament.

We have heard in here today that this is an evolutionary change but this cannot be evolutionary, this is not an attack on my colleague, when one other person has said that we are still holding on to the colonial institutions and if it is said that we become more nationalistic in the transition of the 1960's then if we are still colonial and if the changes are to be effective, they have to be radical. That is why I am saying that sometimes there is a need for more extensive consultations to correct institutions that reach and touch the lives of people to be identified as a strategic point for consultation. That is where the problem lies. We have to have the right strategic points and be willing to reach out and to encourage persons to participate in the required changes in the society. So that is why I said that adjustments are and must be very, very radical in this environment.

Sir, from the experience of many persons in the Civil Service, the simplicity and the manner in which people

communicate by forwarding documents to each other – sometimes you see a file coming to you with two words or one word that does not make sense in standard English, colloquial English, informal English or any form of local vernacular whatsoever. Nobody really can understand what it means but people write it and they pass it on to you. Not only are notes on files illegible sometimes in the forming of the letters but they do not make sense in the construction of the words when put together and if you ask the person who wrote it, what it means, they do not know. So you have a very complex institution responsible for the society itself and they enjoy doing these things. There seems to be some form of massaging of the egos of individuals when they write something that appears to be exotic, very foreign to man, and they enjoy it.

We have all of these difficulties within the Civil Service and they must be touched. You have young civil servants with innovative minds who are willing to make changes and to recommend new methodologies on how to get things done efficaciously but you then have a difficulty with senior civil servants who are sticking to the old order of things and want to force the younger people to conform to the environment; and this does not give growth to any high level of productivity. These people with the most creative minds and with all the energy are wasting time and energy on struggling with internal conflict and do not want to offend persons who could determine whether they have any mobility through the Civil Service or not. These are the harsh realities.
3.55 p.m.

Those at the top believe it is their responsibility to court and comfort Ministers, calling people that they are contentious about, "Mr. Minister, Sir", and are refusing to carry out the mandate of the same department that has been given to them. These are the realities.

If we are to transform a society like this course of conduct that existed before and was never respected by disciplinary action that can be put in place, there are always ways of getting around these things. We have to cultivate an environment of public service that recognises that the service is not to the Minister or to the Government but the service goes to the people, it goes to creating a good society. That is why I am saying that people should be more involved in these things.

Sir, one of the recommendations that I would like to make is that we have an institution, probably a Civil Service college just as you have an institution for the Royal Barbados Police Force in independent Barbados. They have a college for training.

A civil servant whose responsibility is more flexible and he has to adapt to different functions within the Civil Service, one minute he works in Foreign Services, sometimes he can be transferred to the Ministry of Education,

sometimes he can be brought back to NIS with no formal training, no more than 6 "O" Levels, and he is transferred from one place to the other without any special training whatsoever, I believe that if we had a college that can establish a philosophical framework to make him understand what his responsibilities are in a society to the people and can train him and prepare him in advance for the different duties he has to perform, then you would not have people not only deliberately dragging their feet, filibustering, but in some cases not being able to carry out the responsibility to which some senior officer delegates to them. That is why I suggest, Sir, that there should be a special college responsible for training of civil servants. It is the biggest institution. All other institutions are subordinate in relation to the Civil Service because it is like an umbrella body that controls, directs and monitors.

You need to have people that have a greater evaluative perspective, persons with a profound understanding of their administrative responsibilities, not going in there and feeling their way through, who become in tune with the policies and programme of a Government and who are constantly reminded that the programme is the programme endorsed by the people of Barbados, not the stubbornness and the reluctance as in some cases where people pretend to be apolitical when they know the main reason why the productive level is so low and the reason why the policy has not been successful is because they believe that the previous programme was more likely to bring about a level of fruitfulness in the society than the one which the new dispensation introduced.

Sir, I believe that at the top level of Civil Service, whenever a dispensation is changed, there should be some opening, not necessarily a displacement of anyone, but an opening at the beginning of every change which allows that flexibility for a senior person to function and help direct the policy of the new dispensation. I say that because I do not subscribe to the view that civil servants are apolitical or non-partisan in the system itself.

One of the other problems that I would like to speak about is the early stages of the placement of young individuals coming into the service. There seem not to be any clear evaluation or assessment of the persons not just certification but orientation. If you look at the certificates, the CXC's or whatever, you should be able to identify or deduce the orientation of the individual and place that individual in the appropriate slot within the Civil Service. I know that sometimes it might not always be practical.

The reality is that you put a person in a department that deals with accounts and the qualification which he or she has clearly indicates that they were never inclined to be able to have such responsibility. If you see somebody with Home Economics and Domestic Science and Scripture, you do not put them in a department to do Accounts or to work in Foreign

Affairs. I believe that at the level of the Personnel they should be able to examine the certification and to talk to the individual and get some feeling of the capability of that person and put them into a post in the Civil Service which is more conducive to the kind of qualification which they have.

Sir, we can only succeed in making the Civil Service a better place for all of us if we make all the required adjustments now. The reality is that the changes in the world, technical, scientific and administrative, are so radical that any response to that must be equally as radical as the changes around the Civil Service. There must be open consultation with the civil servants themselves at all different levels to let them understand that when one advocates radical change in the system, it has nothing to do with displacement or disruption but with an effort to cultivate the correct institution to meet, to direct, modern government to provide a service for the betterment not only of the civil servants but of the general society of Barbados and the Caribbean.

I believe that the rationale behind this document should have taken all of those things into consideration and that members, and I cannot dictate how they speak, should be able to speak on these matters freely since there are no restrictions in this Honourable Chamber in that regard, not couch their language in such a way that the things they say daily when they come here they do not say. All I am saying is that this policy framework on the basis of a principle is a good step to change but the framework can only be meaningful if it understands what are the things that we need to change and why we need to change them and if we change them what anticipated impact is likely to occur in the society as a result of those changes.

I support this document on the basis of principle but I believe that it is too limited and we ought to carry the philosophical principles that ought to underpin the Civil Service clearly, and we ought to state openly what are the causalities that led us to bring about the major changes in the Civil Service.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.
4.05 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I am happy for the opportunity to make a contribution to this debate. It does not matter whether the whip is off or not because much of what I am going to say I have said it before in another context; but I feel I have to say it now because, at long last, a moment has arrived when in fact it is the business of the House.

I have looked with care at the Report of the Committee established to advise on a policy framework for a new Public Service Act and to be quite honest, Sir, it is more than I

expected but still not as much as I would wish to see. I am not happy in the context of this debate and in the context of a modern public service in Barbados because the Report is not projecting a world view. For a little country like Barbados, a leading developing country in the world, as we say, "punching above its weight" in every sector, I am not seeing the wider vision.

This document is dealing with today's difficulties in the public sector service but it is not a document that has left me with a view of what the public sector would look like in the year 2020 or 2050. I was looking for an even more forward-looking document than what I received. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North pointed out that the document is not earthshaking but it is attempting to correct some of the terrible anomalies, even the attitudes in the public service.

Sir, I started at the back of the document and went to page 75, the Appendix, which is the last page and I look at the speakers at the public meetings. Barbados is a small place and you get to know who people are and they get to know who you are. I saw, as the Honourable Attorney General pointed out, that there were a series of public meetings and the names of the speakers at the public meetings were listed. Sir, too many of them are in my age group and there are too few young people. In fact, it is hard to discern if any people in the age group 20 to 30 addressed this very important matter. In other words, Mr. Speaker, those people who would propel the public service in the year 2020 and 2050 did not seem to be interested enough to want to speak when the opportunity was afforded to this very important matter.

Mr. Speaker, life is about change and choice. I make the point repeatedly that in this new 21st Century, work is going to be defined differently from the way that we knew it in the 20th Century. In every century in recorded history, work has been defined differently. It is already happening in the 21st Century and it is being very much driven by the new technology as we call it.

The kind of vast investment that successive administrations have made in human resources development in Barbados in education, health and training is what is going to help to drive this change. Barbados made this investment in the 20th Century and particularly so in the last 50 years of the 20th Century and we will continue to do.

I heard the Honourable Prime Minister say this morning during an encounter that I had with him in the preparation for the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure which debate is going to come to this Chamber next month, that we are now in Barbados spending more on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital than we are spending on secondary education.

Sir, I do not believe this is so in any other country in this world and I would wish to be contradicted on this but I doubt that I could be. This is the kind of investment we have made and that is why the matter before the House is of such great importance. This investment is a very precious commodity at this time for Barbados because the world now is in deep recession.

Sir, I watch the CNN Financial News as often as I can. It is virtually the only thing that I make time to watch because there is nothing else worth watching. I also read the financial journals whenever I can and I am satisfied that there is no sight yet of this recession "bottling out". Japan is in deep recession. Argentina has fallen through the bottom of their bucket and at a time like this, Little Barbados has a human capital base that is the envy not only of many developing countries but many developed countries as well and we pay a large price for it. When the Estimates come we will see the big price we pay for it but we also know the dividends it will pay.

Sir, the reality is that in these early years of the 21st century, competition is the order of the day particularly so in the Caribbean where we are all selling the same tourism products, the same financial services and the same agricultural product. The only difference between ourselves and our competitors is the quality of the product and in matters of governance we have to start with our public service.

Sir, for too many years, in my judgment, we have been very selective and we have hung onto a lot of outmoded Victorian concepts and ideas that even the British have abandoned. It is good to see in this document that we are beginning to move away from the remaining vestiges of that. 4.15 p.m.

We have to become more competitive, Sir. In the 21st century becoming more competitive means that we have to be just ahead of the technology. Now I can only speak for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. This is an on-line Ministry. I would venture to suggest that it is perhaps the most forward-looking and forward-practising in the Government Service in Barbados today and it has been for several years now. It is a ministry that operates on flexi-time. We have 24-hour security service. I can walk into that Ministry at 1.00 o'clock in the morning and people are coming and going. It is the first Ministry to have its own local network. All of the missions of Barbados abroad are on-line. I speak to the Heads of Missions of Barbados on a fairly frequent basis. I do not have time to go to London to speak to the High Commissioner or to have a meeting with staff there or to go to Toronto or wherever. There is something called the "conference call" and all that is required is for the telephone company if it is in a good mood

to move with a certain amount of alacrity and put the technology in place on the desk.

Yesterday afternoon the Attorney-General was in my office and we were having a discussion on a certain matter. I received a phone call from my counterpart in London. The British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Jack Straw, called and apologised to me for the misinformation peddled by one of his senior officials in a certain matter. He is coming through Barbados and I will be very pleased to entertain him when he comes here.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the skills, systems and productivity are matters which should be discussed in far greater detail in this document. I am a little unhappy that that has not been the case. I have a vision of a Civil Service where there is far more interchangeability between the private and public sectors than this document is suggesting and I would hope that there will be more work for this committee to do and that it would widen its thinking and its horizons to contemplate some of these matters.

Sir, I have a vision because this is how I see it happening in this early century. Somebody in an earlier intervention spoke of flexi-time and it is important because people are no longer going to work the 8-hour day and the 40-hour week. That has already changed. Two years ago the French legislated away from the 40-hour week. It is now a 36-hour week. People are going to work in modules of time and they will get paid for work on the job, not time on the job. Oh, yes! It is happening already. They will be paid for the work. Work is measurable and that is happening already.

Sir, when you pay a consultant, it is not your business how many hours he has taken to arrive at the end product that he has given you but it is the end product for which you pay. He or she already determines how many time modules or what other computation of time that is required to do the work. Sir, we are not discussing something that is so futuristic that you cannot imagine it. This is not science fiction. This is the reality and it is going to become more and more institutionalized.

Sir, I got to Chapter 8 at page 32 of this document. I went to it deliberately because I wanted to see what it was saying about secondment. It quotes what is the General Orders' position on secondment at this time and I quote:

"An officer who remains on secondment for a period in excess of two years may be required to exercise an option of remaining in the service of the organization to which he is seconded or returning to his substantive position in the Public Service."

This was a great disappointment. Two years is nothing in terms of the training and experience that a secondment will bring. I face this in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade on a regular basis. No sooner have we trained people than the private sector is stealing them from us because we cannot afford to pay what the private sector can pay.

There are some who want to remain in the public service. Sir, we have a very bright young man, Mr. François Jackman, who worked as a journalist. This is a very rounded person who is fluent in French and English. His mother is French and his father is a Barbadian man who speaks English. From the day he was born his father only spoke English to him and to this day his mother only speaks French to him. His very first posting to a mission abroad was in Brussels. He writes well and he is so impressive that the new Secretary General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States invited him to become his Chef de Cabinet.

Sir, now there is no way that I could stand in his way. One day he will come back to us as an international civil servant which he is on his way to becoming. It is good for us in the Caribbean to have a Caribbean national at the heart of that organisation which is very critical especially at the time of the trade negotiations such as we have now. What folly to suggest that he should be seconded for two years and the way forward being suggested here that at the end of two years he must make a decision and exercise certain options or he would have to leave the public service. This is short-sighted.

We have just had a wonderful experience in Barbados. Everybody by now should now know of it. Dr. Chelston Brathwaite has become the head of one of the Inter-American systems organisations known as ICA, the institute for agriculture in the Caribbean. It is a wonderful thing that Barbados now heads two such institutions. Sir George Alleyne heads PAHO. His term is coming to an end and it is good that Dr. Brathwaite is coming in and he is going out of the Inter-American system. He was so impressed in the way we ran his campaign. Let's face it, Sir, he won it in great style. He has asked for an officer from our Ministry to be seconded to him. The head office is in Costa Rica. The person is already fluent in Spanish and has a background in economics. Now we cannot stand in this person's way.
4.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, do you understand what it is to have someone like that working next to you? Sir, I hope that you begin to understand my sense of disappointment that this narrow focus cannot be the way to go. Sir, I do not see the foreign service as any separate entity; it is all part of the wider Civil Service because I would like to see far more movement between the main stream Civil Service and the foreign service.

Sir, there is a young man in the Foreign Trade section who was languishing in the Customs Department who is fluent in Spanish and is now blooming in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other sectors of the Ministry pinch personnel from us and we pinch from others too and this is good.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, this is no do-for-do, we are looking at a well-rounded and a far more broadly trained and informed personality. This is the kind of Civil Service that I am looking forward to as these early years of the 21st Century are now upon us.

Sir, I am a little unhappy that the view here taken is far too narrow and too restricted. I would like to see a professional grade in the Civil Service. Everyone now coming into the Civil Service starts at the bottom. Sir, there are highly specialized and qualified Barbadians both at home and abroad who would love to work in the Civil Service and again, we should be able to hire them for a number of years without their losing their rights to adequate pensions and other rights.

Sir, there is this question of supersession where there are high, bright persons who cannot be promoted over other persons. It does not work like that in the private sector, in the schools nor in families. In the schools, the teachers choose the bright ones and help to push them to win scholarships. Why are we now still in a mode in the Civil Service that wants to keep people down to the lowest common denominator? This is not the route to being competitive, this is the outrider to being behind the game in 10 or 20 years from now. Therefore it is too narrow. I would like these draft persons to go back and widen the vision. We have highly sophisticated skilled persons that are needed. Barbados is in the process of trying to negotiate a Marine Delimitation Agreement with Trinidad and Tobago, along with other countries because the seas will be the focus of this 21st Century.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I have said this before, this is nothing new. We have had to hire in the service of cartographers, hydrographers, legal advisors who are highly skilled in oil, gas and other such areas. They come at a very high price, Sir, but are worth every penny. Where are the Caribbean people trained in these areas? When they are trained, the developed countries steal them away from us and they do not pay back. I well remember while I was at the Ministry of Education they would steal people. I had told them quite frankly that if that particular company wanted them so desperately, then let that company pay back. Of

course, we got the money back but it still meant that we had to start from scratch again in training other people. I am not seeing this document addressing this matter and in some of these areas we cannot wait to train people. We have to be able and prepared to buy into their skills. I am not seeing this document showing me the way this should be now made more assessable in this way. It is critical because the financial services sector and other niche sectors that we are looking at, do require these high skills.

The kind of direction we visualise for this Barbados down through the early years of this new millennium are going to require a clutch of skills and experience that the Civil Service must be able to access; it must not be expected that every time we have to go to the private sector for it, for that is where we need the exchange. It is a good thing, in my judgment, that some people would have been able to sit on Both Sides. What has happened in Barbados and, again it is nothing new; the writing is on the wall but we are not seeing it. Sir, the Bible speaks about "those who have eyes but cannot see, those who have ears to hear but cannot hear..." Sir, because they have eyes do not mean that they are seeing. Sir, retired permanent secretaries and other senior technical officers, *et cetera*, are now being invited in by the private sector. Are we asking ourselves why? They believe that these persons have a body of experience, certain skills and expertise that can only be honed in the Civil Service but can now be useful to the private sector, particularly at a time when Barbados is negotiating trade arrangements in three separate theatres: Europe, Brussels and Geneva and the Free Trade Areas of the Americas where meetings are going on in Panama, the current headquarters, and other countries. Sir, that is being carried by the Civil Service. We should see far more private sector engagement in that area.

Sir, there are few little bright lights of hope. Let us look at the rum Lobby which is led by Barbados. Patrick Mayers has done this country a great service, he has shown this country how a private sector lobby can go out there and find its niche and fight for it, see it being snatched away and fight back for it. With the rice lobby in Guyana, if they would only tear a leaf out of the rum lobby's book, they would put Guyana and Suriname on the map as far as rice goes.

I only have five minutes, I am told, therefore I cannot elaborate on that although I have spoken about the arms initiatives and the way in which we cannot speak to countries like Bangladesh on these matters because they have duty free and border free entry into the European market in a way that we do not.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would love that I could come back to this on another occasion. I have looked at the chapter on the Internet and Electronic Governance at page 42 and was pleased to see that at paragraph 10.13:

"It was agreed that the Government should consider facilitating the purchasing of computers by public servants by granting them interest-free loans to buy computers..."

Sir, we are putting computers in the hands of the school children both at the primary and secondary levels and the rest of the world is grinding its teeth. The United States of America is seething because they would not do it – they have guns in their school children's hands, not computers. They are seething as to why we should go get a loan because we feel that we can do it. That is our priority. Well, Rudyard Kipling said don't walk too hard and look too good because knowing human nature, they would want to pull you down.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, something must be wrong if this Administration – and I have every reason to believe that the two Members on the Other Side are fully in agreement with the policy that we have to make our school children computer literate.
4.35 p.m.

Sir, we are putting specially designed laptops in the hands of primary and secondary school children and are you telling me that we are not planning to put them in the hands of the civil servants to run the Government? There is a disconnect here, Sir, and a stronger case has got to be made. Every civil servant has to be computer literate. There is no place I go today that people do not use the computer. If I go to the gas station, the lady who is pumping gas for me is using a computer. If I go to the smallest business house, and they are more literate than I could ever become, as the song says, they are going to learn much more in that generation coming after us than we will ever know. Sir, that is how it should be because we learned much more than our parents and grandparents before us ever knew.

Today's document is not speaking to tomorrow enough and I would like to use these last four minutes to appeal for a second chapter in this endeavour and that will not only...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No. I am happy with what is here from the point of view of correcting today's ills. We have some fairly good material to work with but we now need to look at a chapter which will take the Barbados Civil Service forward very rapidly. All are not committed as we would like to be but that is how life is but we have good material to work with and I would really like to see a far more forward looking document, a document with a far wider horizon than this, a document which can conceptualise a civil service that is working interchangeably with all sectors and particularly with the private sector in this Barbados in my time, Sir, and in your time.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I too would want to say that the Report of the Commission which was established to look on the policy framework for a new Public Service Act has indeed provided a wonderful framework for us to go forward. I say so because when one looks at this Report, one finds a number of challenges which, to my mind, will set a framework for a new Barbados and one in which the Civil Service will be able to perform. Although I must say from the outset that there are many things within this Report, which to my mind, would take a few changes.

Mr. Speaker, one must consider that this Commission was established by the Government in 1999, under the chairmanship of Mr. Erskine Griffith who was the Head of the Civil Service at the time. It comprised the following persons: the Cabinet Secretary, Permanent Secretaries, the public sector, the private sector, the University and the general public.

Sir, I must say, as Minister Mottley has pointed out, that the consultations of the Commission were wide, although I must say that some persons would be of the view that the Commission should go on and on seeking, taking advice and recommendations from the public. If this is done, we would not be able to finish a Report.

Sir, the Report that is contained in this document does highlight a number of changes and challenges for the Government and the public service. The Civil Service that we have in Barbados is generally good and it has withstood the test of times over the years. The Civil Service is one that came through a colonial system into independent Barbados and into post-independent Barbados. It is also one which has been recommended by all of the agencies in Government and outside of Government, internationally, as well as countries in the Commonwealth. These countries have always praised the Civil Service of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the Government of Barbados one must embrace the Civil Service because it is part and parcel of what makes a good Government. We must say that the Government of Barbados has always been a good government, even though the policies may change from time to time. We have had proper service from the Civil Service and I believe that we need to continue with this high excellent service to which we have been accustomed.

However, from time to time there is a need to redefine things like the code of ethics, the conditions of service, discipline and so on within a given entity. Therefore, I would like to look at what I consider as a most important beginning within the Civil Service. Other members have spoken to the need for in-service training. I believe that

when a person has received his five of six "O" Levels or CXC's and he is just put into the Civil Service, there should be in-service training for this individual.

Sir, too many times persons having just passed their "O" Levels and are out of school, go into the Civil Service and they are placed either as a stenographer, secretary, clerk typist or whatever, and they remain in that position for a number of years and they are never trained. I believe, not similar to the police but similar to teachers, there should be an in-service training course, not at the beginning but after they have spent a few months in service, they should be given a type of in-service training and this is needed within the Civil Service.

I do not know if it is happening today, but years ago as a young teacher, there used to be an in-service training course and this is what I would think is really needed for the Civil Service. Too many persons are employed within the Government service without adequate training at the beginning. They are left there for a number of years, sometimes 10 to 20 years on the same spot, marking time and not doing what they are supposed to do; and this is a problem I have found.

I have also found a problem where a number of senior civil servants do not communicate adequately with junior officers. I believe the time has come where a number of the senior officers should not only put the juniors through a training course but there should be more interaction between senior officers and junior officers to show them what to do, to teach them the ways – not necessarily to follow in their footsteps of what they have been doing. There must be new innovations within the Civil Service which will be well for the future of the service. I believe that sometimes these young persons bring new ideas to the fore. I also believe that other individuals can bring new ideas which can be implemented through interaction between the older civil servants and the younger civil servants.

The question of secondment is one which we must examine. There are many persons who have been seconded from one statutory board, or from within the Civil Service or public service into the statutory board. It has been raised today that there are many young persons who have been appointed within the Civil Service and this has caused a number of concerns.

Sir, if you are appointed in the Civil Service, and you are seconded for a two-year period, your position is still guaranteed. Some persons may be seconded for three or four years or as much as 12 years. At the same time your position in your post remains unfilled because somebody will be acting for you, so that person never gets appointed, whereas

you may be holding up a person from going forward and this has happened.

4.45 p.m.

I know that persons would say that you must give those persons on secondment some time, maybe five or six years but what about the person who is acting for you? I do not think secondment is a means of keeping a person down and I believe that secondment should not get in the way of persons moving on to the statutory boards.

There are a number of persons who have been on secondment from the public service to statutory boards to perform a specific role although these are all government services. There are a number of persons who may be kept down within one department but who may blossom in another department and this is where the flexibility within the service is happening. I believe that those persons who are performing good service within a statutory board should be made to declare early that they want to remain in the statutory board thus allowing the younger person who is acting for them in the service to get on and be appointed because if you remain in that position that person cannot be appointed in that post.

I believe that there must be a situation whereby persons in the private sector can come into the public sector for a period of two to three years and then return to the private sector, and *vice versa*, still preserving their rights.

There must be a system in place so that a person who is holding on for someone on secondment will know that his position is secured because that person who is holding on for the person on secondment cannot get anywhere as long as that person holds that position. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this must be looked at.

There is also the question of discipline. I believe that in a service, such as the one we have with over 25 000 employees, that there must be a system of discipline within the system. Not all civil servants work well. There are some civil servants who go on sick leave for a long time maybe two or three years or even longer and you cannot send them home. It takes so long for a person to go before the medical board and then it takes another two years before that person finally retires and I believe that this must be dealt with firmly. Too many officers within the Civil Service are out on leave for long periods of time and heads of departments find it very difficult to get them disciplined.

A question came up recently about the type of leave that is given to civil servants who attend university. There are a number of persons in the Civil Service who are doing all types of disciplines at the Barbados Community College or at the University of the West Indies and many of them have complained that they have not been given time by the

heads of departments to pursue their studies. This is a problem that the Personnel Administration Division will have to deal with. I believe that young persons should be given the chance to study and be exposed to education and training but it has to be done in a systematic way.

I believe that the heads of ministries and departments should organise a roster for those persons who want to study and should try to form them or put them into a programme because too many persons within the Civil Service are doing management studies. If you ask many persons in the Civil Service what they are studying you will find that all of them are doing either management, public sector reform, public sector and management, economics and management or government and management. Very few are doing science or other disciplines that are really relevant and I believe that this is where the Head of the Civil Service should sit down with young officers and point them in the right direction. There is a need for that.

There is a need for the Personnel Administration Division to spend more time in counselling young officers into the way for the future. I believe that not enough time and energy is spent to help these young persons to form their careers in the way that they should for the future.

Mr. Speaker, the other question that is of importance to us is the question of retirement. It is a known fact that the retirement age in the Civil Service is about 60 or 65 years of age. Some statutory boards would go to 65 years whereas in the public service it is at 60 years. Can you imagine in a society as ours, the retirement of an officer at 60 years who carries with him most of the knowledge of that Ministry? Most of the top officers do not consult with their junior officers and they do not allow the junior officers to know what they know and, therefore, you would find an officer retiring at 60 years old, carrying with him or her all the knowledge of that department; and that is unfair. So to my mind a compulsory retirement at age 60 is a waste of time.

I believe that there are some officers who should retire at 30 and some at 40 and there are some persons who should retire even before that because they are not producing. But when you have an officer who is producing, who is knowledgeable, who is willing to work and is productive, then we should not ask that officer to retire at the age of 60 at all. That should be left to the discretion of the Personnel Administration Division.

We have officers who have retired from the public service at the age of 60 but these same officers will go on to statutory boards or in the private sector and perform other services. Daily, we are seeing a number of our permanent secretaries who have gone to the private sector and are

advising private sector boards. Many of them are performing valuable services in the private sector and we know that some of them work beyond their 70th birthday.

In other parts of the United States of America it is against the Constitution to ask a man to retire at the age of 60 years. I believe that to have compulsory retirement at the age of 60 in Barbados may very well be against our Constitution too. So I think we may have to look at the retirement of persons at 60 years. Of course, this will mean that we will have to keep continuous information and records on people.

Sir, I have made a case that people who are on permanent leave should be asked to retire early. Persons on medical leave should be told, "Madam, Sir, you are sick and you will be compensated. We know how you feel, but you should go home." Those persons who are willing to work and are working should not be encouraged to go at the age of 60.
4.55 p.m.

There are also a number of civil servants who stand against progress. We have heard the case of a number of civil servants who sometimes withhold information and do not put themselves in a way to advise Ministers and heads of departments. I must say in my case that we have had a number of officers who will go beyond the call of duty to advise a Minister, to do work. We have had outstanding civil servants who have written fine Reports who have used their talents and skills and have performed vital service for the Government of Barbados. This is a fact. When this happens, I believe those civil servants should be rewarded. I believe the time has come for us to reward persons not based on a monthly salary but maybe on a consultancy basis, if you have civil servants who are performing a vital role, let's say, as in my Ministry, in the Housing and Planning Unit, or in the Land Registry. When we have a professional who is doing a good service, who is performing well who is giving good advice, sometimes it might be better for us to get that person into a consultancy where that person would be able to do better and make more money and feel himself or herself more valuable within the present system.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, we have had a number of persons saying things about the Civil Service. We have heard persons call them "an army of occupation" we have heard persons saying that they are of no use, such things as might be said from time to time about a big organisation such as the Civil Service but, in my experience, I have found that most civil servants will go beyond the call of duty to help the Government and to help the system. As I said from the outset, we generally have a good Civil Service that is willing to change and we have to be able to manage them in an efficient way which will help them to be more productive and more efficient.

This Government has spent a lot of money on accommodation. I believe that when the history of post-independent Barbados is written one will find that this Government has spent more money on accommodation for the civil servants than any previous government. For example, when I came to office the Government was spending a mere \$4 million on accommodation for the entire Civil Service. Today we are spending more than \$17 million on Civil Service accommodation. We are spending money on better buildings – almost every civil servant now has a car – car-parking facilities. We are spending money on better computers, almost every civil servant has a phone on his or her desk. Government is spending a lot of money and we are very conscious of the fact that we have to provide better accommodation as time goes on.

As I see it, Mr. Speaker, over the next three or four years the Government will have to spend another \$25 million to \$30 million on accommodation for civil servants. Still a number of civil servants are under depressed conditions even though we are spending \$17 million. The point is that over the next three or four years we will have to spend more money either to provide improved accommodation because some of the buildings we are leasing are not in the best condition and do not remain in good condition over a period of time. Government is conscious of the fact and we will continue to upgrade and improve the lives of the civil servants. With the new building at Warrens, I know we are going to talk about that but we will have to improve that. There is also new accommodation for the Ministry of Civil Service, new accommodation for the Justice Department, accommodation for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accommodation for a number of other departments which are crying out and are bursting at the seams because this Government has not reduced the Civil Service in any way. In fact, since 1994 we have hired people.

This Government has taken on more persons within the Civil Service. It is now more than it was ever before and therefore new and better accommodation is needed and we will continue to provide accommodation for the Civil Service in a modern Barbados. I believe that once this is done we should expect better productivity. Once we provide the better accommodation we should see improved performance, efficiency from the Civil Service. It is not always true to believe that all is well within the Civil Service. We have heard of problems and, as I have said, there is a need to set up a system of discipline.

Mr. Speaker, I have pointed to the need to set up a commission to look at retirement and the question of secondment within the Civil Service. I am obliged to you. 5.05 p.m.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the debate for a new Public Service Act. The Report

outlines a number of areas which will help to effect changes in the system if they are implemented. There are issues such as transparency, fairness, discipline, promotion, training, technology, treatment meted out to the public and recruitment among a number of areas.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my distinct pleasure to have worked in the system for more than 25 years. I can safely say that this is where I would have developed some of the skills that I now bring to my job as a result of working with senior officers in the Civil Service who were exceptionally good at that time. I must confess that there are still many persons in the system who are excellent workers who have the interest of Barbados at heart and they work effectively and efficiently to make sure that Barbadians receive the benefits that are available. Mr. Speaker, many of them are able to transfer knowledge and skills to others within the system.

Mr. Speaker, we know that many civil servants of the past possessed excellent skills. They came to the job with a sense of commitment, dedication and service and I can speak to the area of the school environment where a principal who I worked with gave every member of staff an opportunity to do something. She would remind individuals that if they were ever given the opportunity to act as principal or deputy principal they would have the skills to do so. She did not think it was her domain or that she should be selfish. I do not think this is happening in our schools now but I want to encourage principals and other leaders in the system to ensure that they give young people an opportunity to learn and deliver a high quality service.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of a good civil service there is a measure of good governance and stability in this country and I trust this will continue for many years to come. I have observed within the last 15 years that there has been deterioration in many areas, especially indiscipline, attitudes, accountability and all the other things that would help to make the system one that a person would be happy to work in.

Many of our people seem to think that when they receive appointments in the system they can become eye servants, stay away from work when they feel to and do as they please. This bothers me because, in addition to what I mentioned before, people are not punctual, they go to work irregularly, there is snobbery, complacency and low productivity. Sir, many workers go to lunch for long hours, some absent themselves for whatever reason from the job, many watch what others do, so they do nothing at their desk for the whole day.

We all know there is petty corruption and, as has been said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, there is major corruption in some areas and we need to tackle

this situation now before it starts to escalate. We know that pilferage takes place in many institutions. It may not be at a high level in each institution but, Mr. Speaker, if there is pilferage in every institution then it amounts to millions lost that could go towards helping more people in this country to give them better education, health, housing and amenities. Therefore, I have a difficulty when nothing is done about this because we know of people who open supermarkets and cook shops and get a second amount of money by using the Government's resources. Sir, systems should be put in place to stamp this out immediately and to ensure that such wrong doings will cease immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke about absenteeism earlier and there is nothing that can impact on the system more than people attending funerals, especially morning funeral. This is also something that we have to look at. Sir, I attend funerals too but when I was in the school system I could not do it like I do now because I have more leverage in the work I am doing now. Sir, many go sightseeing and they even stay home for birthdays and anniversaries nowadays. These petty things seep into the system because of the lack of accountability and the public suffers as a result.

Mr. Speaker, I also have a difficulty with the system for the Medical Board. Many individuals are genuinely ill but I observe many individuals who stay away from work and you can see them working elsewhere. Even though they may be wearing a collar, yet they still receive their salary. Many go to the medical board and are given the opportunity to leave the system but then they do another job even though they are receiving invalidity benefits.

Mr. Speaker, the younger people then say, if the adults are doing such, then perhaps they can do it too and get away with it. Sir, these issues need to be tackled as a matter of urgency to insure that there is transparency in the system.

Mr. Speaker, I support efforts for reform in this country even though we have not reached the stage where all Government departments have implemented systems as effectively as others, they are some that I can mention, that please my heart. At the Immigration Department there is a new form for travel and there is a suggestion box in the office so that individuals can make a contribution to what is taking place. The National Assistance Board and the Welfare Departments both acknowledge correspondence sent to their departments and that helps to add flavour to what has been happening before. I want to commend these various departments for the efforts made.

Other departments have set up complaints desks where one can call and make complaints. I understand that the National Housing Corporation now has a desk where

individuals can express concerns and views and they will be addressed. I am not sure of the time frame for the reply but I know that an effort is being made and I would want to see more of that taking place. Sir, the committee that has been working over the past few years on the reform in the public sector must be commended for their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, some senior civil servants are fearful that because younger people are entering the system with better qualifications that they will take away their jobs. These young people come not only with excellent qualifications but with excellent attitudes and are multi-talented and then some of the actions and malpractices of the seniors help to poison their mind.

5.15 p.m.

Therefore, I think that if there is a good system in place for individuals to know what their rights are, for them to know the Code of Ethics and the other systems that are put in place, that it can help in those departments where such things are showing their ugly heads. A lot of our young people have good initiatives, good quality and good attitudes and I think they should be given the opportunity to show their worth, to allow others to see them and to emulate their actions. I also observe there is a lot of wastage in the system, wastage of property: chairs, tables, books, paper and other amenities that are used willy-nilly and that people do not seem to bother because it is the Government's property. Sometimes even the public do the same thing. They pinch the sponge out of the Government's buses, do all kinds of strange things and say that it is the Government's road. People need to change that attitude and recognize that we make the Government. We all are the ones who pay the taxes. We all are the ones who stand to benefit or to suffer when these things are done and therefore we need to cut down on the wastage within the system.

Mr. Speaker, I support that recommendation for the Code of Conduct. Too many of our people are uncouth and I need to say this again. I am not currently aware of the system of appraisal within the general public sector but I know that within the school system there were appraisals set up where the principal and heads of departments would make comments as to teachers' performance. We are currently working on the teachers' appraisal and I think it a necessary exercise that individuals be accountable for their actions. I am a firm believer that when persons do wrong and acknowledge that wrong, that whoever forms the authority, those persons should be given the chance to be aware of their wrongdoing and to put systems in place in order to correct that wrong, if at all possible so that they can acknowledge their mistake while bearing responsibility for their action. Hence the opportunity for mediation, conciliation and all the other things that go with that are necessary if we are to make changes in the system as it currently is.

I know that the General Orders are within the various departments and I think that it is unfortunate that in most instances it seems to be unavailable when young or new persons come into the system and are not familiar with what is expected of them. Therefore, I support wholeheartedly the call for training in the form of an induction course so that when young persons come into the system they are made aware of what standards are set; they know they are not supposed to be absent for any number of days without submitting a doctor's certificate, *et cetera*, and that they bring to the job a measure of professionalism. I think, Sir, it is most important at this time that they get to know the rules and regulations that help to prepare them on that professional path.

Mr. Speaker, this is a small society. I am not pointing a finger at anybody but I know that deterioration has started in this system because of families, friends, boyfriends, girlfriends and partners in this system, so that if I am a senior officer working in a department and I have a relative who is working in the same department and is doing something wrong I, the senior officer, am afraid to speak to that person. When this is done, there are other persons who are watching to see how this matter is being dealt with and when they see that the person in authority is not dealing with the issues that are confronting him, then the workers begin to lose that respect for that senior officer who is expected to run the department effectively. Sir, the comments we hear daily, for example, nobody is going to burn my house down, or nobody is going to make me lose my job at 59 years, *et cetera*. Sir, that is the kind of callous attitude that is now in the system in many instances that is causing the breakdown in respect of the Code of Ethics and the smooth running of the department under which we all expect to function. Therefore, standards have dropped in many areas and we need to ensure that measure of professionalism, accountability and transparency is put back in place whether the person is your relative or whatever.

Sir, I would like to think that if someone is my friend or family, they would try in every respect to do everything that is important to ensure that they do not embarrass me or cause my name to be knocked about for persons to say that I am a weak leader and not performing my duties as professionally as I should. I think at this time in our history we need to become more professional and responsible for our actions if Barbados and Barbadians are to be able to compete in the global market. Our public sector has to be more proficient in everything it does because, like the rest of the world, we must be on the cutting edge.

I support that call in the document for training to be mandatory, especially in the area of technology. We heard the Honourable Member for the City speak to the young people at gas stations, supermarkets and at the hospitals who are operating computers. Almost at every sphere of life,

people are now using the technology to make their life easier and more effective.

Mr. Speaker, when we started to look at the technology within the school, the Barbados Union of Teachers (BUT) – and I will give them the praise – was approached so that teachers can access loans to be able to get their own computers. I think that is the way to go. The agencies that we have always been putting our monies into should grant that service to civil servants as well as to make them become available and aware as to what are their duties. It is unlikely that I would want to be in a classroom where children have access to computers at home and I am not capable of using the technology so that I can, at least, be more able to transfer more knowledge and skill to the students who are under my care. Therefore, I must laud the BUT for that initiative more than four years ago. Sir, I too was able to access it because I am a member of the Teachers Credit Union.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make mention of the leaders within the Government departments to be able to speak to the area of training, training for the Permanent Secretaries, Personnel Officers, Senior Officers and particularly when it comes to illnesses in the workplace. Many of these persons do not have a human heart – most of them have – and it is unfortunate at this stage of our life where there are many social diseases – AIDS, drugs and particularly alcohol consumption among workers, cancer or diabetes. Sir, any leader should have that compassion to be able to work with that individual and to give them the opportunity to know that someone cares for them. Every time we see someone who is under the influence of alcohol being knocked around, insulted or given nothing to do and is heavily criticised.

I know that the network services are working in conjunction with the Government and I know there are many other agencies that work with officers who have been experiencing difficulties such as these, especially within the area of counselling. I know many of them can be helped if given the opportunity and if the leader recognises the various challenges with which some of the employees are faced. I also support our leaders being trained in trade unionism because that gives them a better understanding of the mediation and conciliation and all the other areas of trade unionism so that when discussions come to the fore, they are able to speak with a background of knowledge and understanding of the various issues that may arise.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the opinion, and I will say it again that any senior officer that is worth his salt will make himself available for training or will go out and source training in order to put himself on the cutting edge. Indeed, I know of many teachers who do not need that requirement, who want to be on the cutting edge and these teachers ensure that they go to Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity (BIMAP) and do courses in the management of

human resources and the management of the public service, *et cetera*, because they want to be able, not only to deal with adults alone or with other fellow teachers but they want to be able to work better with the students who are put under their care. I know the BIMAP authorities usually give civil servants reduced fees in order for them to participate in such activities and I would like to commend this to all other public officers.

Sir, everything in the world cannot be free and every ounce of training that one receives in Barbados cannot be free. Sometimes we have to learn to pay our way if we want to be the best person working in the institution that is under our care. Prime Minister I want to laud those people who cannot get the money to help themselves and go to the Student Revolving Loan and to other agencies for help. I am not saying that in every case all individuals can do it, but certainly we need to remove ourselves from the “give me” activity and try to see how we can help ourselves in the whole exercise.

5.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the flexi time discussion is one that I would want to mention. I support it and I do not think that all civil servants are dishonest. Thousands of them are honest and thousands of them are committed to granting high quality service to this country. I know that we would not have to be peeping behind civil servants if they decided that because of the traffic on mornings and indeed on evenings, and we know the horrors, if there is a system put in place from 10.00 a.m. or 11.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., I do not think that we would have to peep behind those officers because they know their duties and they are willing to carry them out effectively.

Indeed, I have seen officers, particularly when we were over at the Jemmotts Lane compound who would leave to go to a funeral in the morning to play the organ but came in and worked through until 7.00 p.m. or 8.00 p.m. to clear their desk and to do all the things that were necessary in preparing for the day that will follow. I think that would help a lot in freeing up the traffic on our streets and ensuring that people are more productive on their jobs.

I also think, Mr. Speaker, that there is a measure of secrecy that is lacking in the system. Therefore, I think that individuals, I speak under correction, in the Civil Service used to swear to secrecy and I would like for those at the National Insurance to swear to secrecy, if it is not happening. I am only saying National Insurance from the perspective of the health of persons. I do not know if it still happens but I thought that system was in place and that is not the only one.

Mr. Speaker, any person who comes into the Civil Service should have to swear to secrecy because too much of people's private business ends up on the road because individuals bring out information which they have to deal with from files and other documents. If we are professional,

then we must rise above the gossip – “Cou-Cou and Flying Fish” know too much about people. I think that measure of secrecy should be adhered to in every department in the Government Service. If someone has HIV/AIDS, everybody does not have to know because at some point in time, it is going to come into every household, if we do not get the necessary treatment and practise the lifestyle that is necessary at this point in time in our lives.

I spoke about the idea of multi-talented individuals who can come to the fore and bring a number of other skills that will help the various departments. Just as we have teachers in the schools who have degrees in Science but they can teach English, Maths and other subjects, I think that we need to get more multi-talented persons who can offer the best service in order for the system to become as professional as possible in the delivery of this service to our people.

We know that there are civil servants who come to the fore with a community spirit, Mr. Speaker, who have a feeling of concern for the poor. They respect the law, order and authority. I know that in order for me to get into teaching, a testimonial had to be written for me by somebody I knew. That is how I came into the system. Mr. Speaker, I think we need to get back to that because it is not enough to come with the CV alone because we do not know the character of individuals and if we have people who have strange personalities and people who are snobbish, I think that will subtract from the whole exercise. It is not only the paper qualifications now but we are looking at attributes that individuals will bring to the fore, when they have to interface, not only with co-workers, but indeed with the general public.

Sir, some people joined CERO which was an integral part of everybody's Barbadian life. The community where you live was important to you so you joined CERO and played your role when there was a hurricane, flood and so on. Nowadays, you cannot even get a quorum for a CERO Committee meeting in the communities where people live. In the past people belonged to councils and that was something that was used. I am happy to know that the Ministry of Education is now looking at young people who are coming in with skills from community involvement because we need people who have that kind of interest to interface with our children and help to build communities again so that Barbados will become again the gem of the Caribbean.

Therefore, the measure of maturity that you can bring if you come in with a community spirit, the commitment, concern and care that you can share with individuals who come with a series of difficulties, especially poor people, and we have a lot, we need those people who will have a human face to work with them and not to shout at them as

sometimes happens by a small percentage of those working in welfare, NAB and some of the other departments that we have in the system. It is a small percentage but we would like it stamped out totally because every human being should be respected and loved, despite whatever status he or she is at in the society.

Sir, I always have a tremendous difficulty with snobbery. We get it in the private sector sometime, Mr. Speaker, but for us to have it happening on a consistent basis in the public sector and not dealing with it, says we are turning a blind eye. We must deal with it and hence this document, if these ideas are implemented, will surely assist with helping to stamp out some of the wrongs and ills that our people are experiencing on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I want to say sincere thanks to that Committee. I knew that it would call for hard work and dedication to be able to visit those various sites and to get the input from the public. The input is very significant to this whole exercise. Perhaps we do not have enough because not everybody now has a car to get to St. Peter or St. James and especially at night when we know that we are faced with so many other challenges. I am happy to know that there was consultation at public level and I want to laud the efforts of those individuals who made the sacrifice to ensure that people were able to make that input and to look at effectiveness and efficiency in the system, timely decision making, the high degree of confidentiality, greater external and internal customer satisfaction, decentralisation, delegation of functions, good work ethics, good attitudes and other areas that I know will help the Civil Service to come back.

I know that if these areas that are recommended are enforced so that individuals respect the general orders, respect the document, I am sure that the call-in programmes would not have an opportunity to criticise the Civil Service in this way. I am sure that we would not have to come in here and speak with the kind of passion about the wrongs that are

happening when we know that more than 95 percent of the civil servants are giving good service. Sir, the small percentage of those who are not acting correctly or perhaps do not have the knowledge that they are not doing well, need to be told and need to get back on that straight path that will help them to deliver to the people of Barbados, the quality service that we know they can offer so that our country can continue again to make people feel that they are wanted and they are part of this country because, as our motto says, "Pride and Industry", we will all develop a further pride for the Civil Service of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that further consideration of this Resolution be deferred.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today. At this stage I would like to indicate that the House be now adjourned until Tuesday 26th February, 2002.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday 26th February, 2002 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

5.35 p.m.

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