
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 2, 2002

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, July 2, 2002.

PRESENT

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

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

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. Sir Harold St. JOHN, K. A., Q.C., LL.B.

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

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

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

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

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

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

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

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

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Physical Development and the 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, J.P., B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil., (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

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

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, 25th June, 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, 25th June, 2002, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: A Message from the Honourable the Senate to the Honourable the House of Assembly.

“At the Fifty-First Meeting of the Honourable The Senate held on the 26th day of June, 2002, the

Message from the Honourable The House of Assembly to the Honourable The Senate inviting the concurrence of The Senate in the Address of Congratulation to Her Majesty, the Queen, on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the Throne was received, and the Address was duly concurred in, to be submitted to His Excellency, the Governor-General in the terms of the Message from your Honourable House.

Signed: FRED GOLLOP

President.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) Order, 2002.
2. Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order, 2002.
3. Civil Establishment (Part-Time Officers) Order, 2002.
4. Judges (Remuneration and Pensions) (Conditions of Service Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations, 2002.
5. Ombudsman (Salary) Order, 2002.
6. Parliament (Administration) (Salaries) Order, 2002.
7. Judges (Salaries) Order, 2002.
8. Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 2002.
9. Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 2002.
10. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Malcolm Grimes) Order, 2002.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of the parcels of land situated at Highway 'W' in the parish of St. George for road improvement.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43, 44.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 10 – TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 2002

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to start the Debate on this Resolution which is rooted in the provisions of the Civil Establishment Act, Cap. 21, which provides for the Minister responsible for Establishment to establish offices in the public service to determine the levels of emoluments which are attached to such offices and to empower the Minister, subject to the approval of Parliament by way of a Resolution, to make adjustments to such emoluments from time to time.

Sir, I want to start by expressing some admiration, thanking the public of Barbados for the sterling contribution they have made to national development over these years and, more particularly, since our years of Independence.

Sir, the civil service – that non-political arm of the executive – its institutions and officers which continues year in, year out; day in, day out, to assist in the administration of our democracy, has been a force of stability. It has provided services which are high in quality. It has also so conducted itself over the last several decades as to be respected both locally and internationally for transparency, general honesty and efficiency.

Sir, when the public service of Barbados is being compared to that of several other countries, one can only conclude that we are, indeed, the beneficiaries of superior service. This is not, of course, to say there are not areas of shortcomings, neither is there not the need for a revamping and restructuring of the service to meet modern times and challenges. This is not to say everything is perfect with all departments and with all individuals but, in the aggregate, if we are to be truthful to ourselves and were to conduct a full and clear analysis to compare ourselves with our peers – those other countries of this region and elsewhere who would have received their Independence during the 1960s – we could see our levels of development in both economic and social spheres can be traced to the contributions by way of service.

Sir, the extent to which our public officers have, overtime, either been recognised by their work in international organisations, we have been able to place our officers in the United Nations Development Programme, Organisations of American States, The World Bank, and other agencies, is a testimony to their quality. Of course, there are also those unsung heroes who, working in their individual departments, are either recognised by their peers for the general and thorough knowledge of the departments or by the clients they serve in the community. Sir, I salute them for that.

Sir, it is my assessment that our public officers deserve every cent of the increase which, with Parliament's permission, this Administration proposes to give them and to say that the level of our increase is only limited by the need to be continually watchful. Also to ensure that we are able to afford any level of increase which we contemplate and that the increase in expenditure which can be contributed to increase in public service salaries do not work to the overall detriment of our economy.

We are satisfied the level of increase which is being proposed in this Parliament is one which recognises that the public servants are deserving of every cent of that increase. Also one which will not imperil the Barbados economy. Sir, it is against that background that we need to work.

Sir, I want to say at the beginning of this Debate, we are now in the year 2002. This matter goes back to April 1, 2001. As you will recall, the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) representing the public workers of Barbados made submissions to the Government last year. Again, to their credit, in light of the horrific events of September 11, 2001, and the great uncertainty into which this economy and others were cast, CTUSAB agreed to defer negotiations leading to the conclusion of a wage settlement for public workers until we had come to the end of our emergency economic recovery programme. There was a clear indication of what our economic circumstances would be such that would allow us, as reasonable people, in Government and in the workers' representatives, to come to an agreement, which would have effect on the two agreements which were indicated earlier – our ability to afford, as well as recognising the fact that these increases are deserved.

Sir, I must salute the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) and the general public workers of Barbados for the great example of nationalism by way of their ready willingness to postpone those negotiations.
11.30 a.m.

Sir, one would have to be blind not to notice that the background for this spirit of cooperation was the good faith and the strong positive action taken by this Administration in

dealing with the public workers of Barbados.

Sir, you will recall that the National Emergency Economic Programme was predicated on the fundamental basis that we would maintain public sector employment. We made a statement from early and indicated clearly that we would not be reducing public sector employment as part of these economy recovery efforts. Prior to that and, indeed, through the life of this Administration we undertook a series of initiatives for the benefit of public workers in Barbados and they knew that they could treat with respect, treat as accurate and as serious our clear assertion and commitment to the maintenance of public sector employment even during the uncertainty of September 11.

Sir, this can be contrasted to the efforts of the Democratic Labour Party in relation to the public sector of Barbados which could only have been seen as being the worst nightmare that public servants have ever experienced in their lives. Sir, I will speak more about that as this debate continues.

If we are to go forward in this debate, we need to be able to set the achievements and gains made on behalf of the public service of Barbados against the backdrop of the long distance they had to travel in order to regain their previous position. It is a fact that public workers in Barbados ended up being worse off at the end of the last Democratic Labour Party's administration, which thankfully ended in 1994, than when that party assumed power in 1986. Sir, it was a nightmare to have to endure eight years of Democratic Labour Party administration. The stark contrast is so clear that even a blind man on a trotting horse would be able to see the difference between the treatment that public servants received under this Barbados Labour Party administration and that of the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, the public sector continues to be a major sector for employment in Barbados. During last year, of the 128 800 persons employed across Barbados in terms of statutory boards and the civil service, Government employed 26 200 persons. In other sectors like wholesale and retail, they employed 22 900; in general services 19 000 and in tourism 13 700.

I want to say also that because of the diverse nature of the services provided by the public officers of Barbados whether in the civil service or statutory boards, their role as agents of development is paramount. They provide services to the public ranging from defence and security with the police and defence forces to important economic and social regulations like the Town & Country Planning Department; the Fair Trading Commission and other entities. In terms of our social development, health and education and in the

provision of public infrastructure by way of roads and other facilities.

They also provided great expertise in the financial, fiscal and monetary management of Barbados like the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Barbados and other agencies. Sir, they performed a very important role and, therefore, how they are treated, what opportunities are provided, what career paths are developed so that new persons can have confidence in seeking to join the public sector and contribute to national development, are all very important.

Sir, I hope the Democratic Labour Party does not suffer from any political amnesia in this debate and forget the harm they caused the civil service. The public service was not matched by public reward under the Democratic Labour Party. In fact, the way civil servants were treated you would think they had committed a crime against the society.

The legacy of the Democratic Labour Party from 1986 to 1994 can only be characterised as it relates to the civil service as a legacy of lost jobs where over 3 000 persons were sent home; of lost homes; lost credit rating and access to credit, even physical and mental ailments caused by stress and anguish of that period of administration.

Indeed, the very institutional fabric of the public service of Barbados was threatened by the destruction wrought upon the civil servants.
11.40 a.m.

Sir, as if that were not enough, one could only recall the pain to thousands of workers who were put on short time. The National Conservation Commission (NCC), Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (BAMDC), National Assistance Board (NAB) and National Housing Corporation (NHC) workers were put on a three-day week. Good decent workers were unable to provide for their families under that Administration.

Sir, as if that were not enough, 8 per cent of their salaries was cut for a period of eighteen months and the public workers of Barbados underwent that hardship. Sir, you would know that an 8 per cent cut on gross wages, given the way the tax is structured could be as much as a 25 per cent cut in disposable income. Mr. Speaker, there was no training of staff nor appointments made. The civil servants got nothing under the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, by contrast, this Administration on coming into office in 1994, has been able, not only to reverse the legacy of the last Administration but to set on a new path of growth

and development for public servants in Barbados, recognising that building institutional capacity is an important aspect of our national development efforts. If it is not within the Government, the capacity to implement capital projects, implement a range of social programmes, provide education and health services, provide training and development for the future, this country would grind to a halt as far as its long-term development is concerned.

Sir, Governments, in our small developing economies have, over the period since Independence, had to play a strong catalytic role in development. We are not at that stage or size of development where the country and the economy can be left on auto pilot. The role of government may change but there continues to be a strong positive and powerful role for government as a catalyst for economic development. Sir, this Administration has been able to reserve the downward trend in the civil service and give it a new direction. I am satisfied that we have more than properly discharged our responsibility.

Sir, let me remind you that when it comes to a worker's security of tenure under the previous Democratic Labour Party administration, workers' positions were weakened. In 1971, casual workers had their pension entitlement removed and we have since dealt with that. Sir, you would know of the adversarial relationship between the government and the unions in 1974, where the former leader of that Government blasted the union and labelled the civil service as an army of occupation and any other negative description that can be found was given to them. Sir, you also know of the attempt under the last Administration, which worsened the situation by way of providing a few public officers at the top with approximately \$33 million and some of them said that they needed wheel barrows to cart away spoils but the majority of hardworking decent civil servants were left with nothing. Mr. Speaker, I have already mentioned the more recent ills that have come from that Side.

Sir, by way of contrast, our record is quite clear. On coming into office on the heels of the 8 per cent cut and the wages freeze, the public servants of Barbados got their first salary increase in years in the 1995/1996 period when an agreement was struck for a 2.5 per cent increase at the top and 3.5 per cent at the bottom. From there, they have received increases in each wage settlement.

Sir, in the 1996/1997, there was a 3 per cent increase across the board; 1997/1998, there was a 6.2 per cent increase; 1998/1999, a 3 per cent increase; 2000/2001, there was a 2.5 per cent increase. Sir, what is important to note, the level of increases, when they are compounded and compared against the level of inflation, they have allowed the workers to stay ahead of the curve. At the end of the

day the real increase in wages is a matter of balancing the dollar value increase against the level of inflation. One of the principal economic strategies of this Administration in taxation has been the management of a low inflation rate.

We know of the harm that can be caused by way of having a runaway inflation. It can wreak havoc on your lower income workers to have the value of their earnings eroded by the rate of inflation. Therefore, against the background of low average inflation, we have been able to provide annual increases for the public workers in Barbados and restoring some level of comfort, decent livelihood and making sure that they have a real stake in this society by way of having meaningful wages.

Sir, as if that were not enough, we were faced with the task of the repayment of the 8 per cent cut. It was imposed on us but we made a decision that as a matter of principle, we believed that workers were entitled to a restoration of those emoluments which were taken from them during the 1991/1993 period. Therefore, during the two fiscal years, 1999/2001, we were able in three tranches to repay over \$60 million which was taken from the workers of Barbados by way of that 8 per cent cut.

Sir, we also recognised the importance of other policies on the spending power of civil servants as well as workers in Barbados in general. One of the beneficiaries of our entry policy would have been the workers of Barbados. Over the past five years, our policies with respect to the reduction of taxes on energy products have resulted in a give-back of \$52.4 million. If the taxes had remained at the level they were previously, the Government would have raked in \$52.4 million. Sir, by way of a reduction, that money which would have been paid into the hands of the Government is now back in the hands of the workers of Barbados, including the 26,200 workers in the government service.
11.50 a.m.

Therefore, Sir, by way of the money which is available to public officers for them to peruse their personal and family obligations there is more of that around. There were other important and very fundamental aspects of the working relationship between Government as employer and its workers which needed to be addressed. The whole matter of conditions of service was one of which we have a proud record. Since 1995, the rate of allowances paid into the public service have increased by a minimum of 15 per cent. That means there are some areas that the increase has been even greater. We dealt with issues of the travel allowance paid to public officers. We dealt with an increase in the level of washing and laundry allowances for police, firemen and prison officers. We dealt with matters as personal to individuals as the shoe allowance which is paid for nursing personnel.

There are other special allowances for heavy equipment workers. For example, those working with the asphalt equipment at the Ministry of Public Works. Postmen have had the allowance which they are paid for the upkeep of their motorcycles increased from \$138 a month to \$250 a month. Entertainment allowances have been increased for those categories of entitled public workers. Allowances for doctors at the QEH and polyclinics have been increased. The ceiling as a maximum amount on the side of loans available to public officers who travel on Government business has been increased during that period from a maximum of \$20 000 to \$35 000 as well as the repayment period increased from five years to seven years. The postmen have also been able to purchase their motorcycles free of duty. An array of things have been done.

One of the most fundamental, far-reaching and impactful steps that have been taken by this Government and one which strikes not only at the business of the employer/employee relationship but one which strikes at the necessary goal of economic and social empowerment for the underprivileged has been the appointment of thousands of persons to the public service of Barbados, not only by way of regular appointments but the conversion, the removal of the concept and term of casual worker to making those persons permanent employees of Government.

Sir, you had a situation of a class system, almost a caste system operating. It was as rigid as that. There was a caste system operating within the public service of Barbados. You could not move from one to the other. If you went in at the lower caste of casual worker, there you remained for 33 1/3 years and you left as you came, employment at the Crown's pleasure with one day's notice on either side. They say you are casual but yet you have been working steady five days a week rainfall, sunshine and you are casual. You are working every week of the year except for your little holiday for 33 years and you are still casual.

You go to the bank to say you want to put on a little toilet and bath at the back of your house, you do not want to go out in the rain to do the usual thing. The bank would say, "You do not have any work. You are too casual." They were not referring to your style of dress. They were referring to the fact that because you could be dismissed on a moment's notice, a day's notice, and not by any Public Service Commission, you know, Sir, the Permanent Secretary could send you home. After 20 or 30 years, the bank would not lend you any money.

Do you know who we are talking about, Sir? We are not talking about people from Mars, we are not talking about illegal immigrants. We are talking about Barbadians, born and bred. We are talking about workers at MPW, road weeders, some of the carpenters, plumbers and artisans in the

Government. We are talking about general workers at the agricultural stations, people at NCC, bus drivers, all the cleaners at the Airport. We are talking, Sir, about decent, hard-working people, people clearing the drains, people cleaning the wells, some of the maids in the office. We are talking about people that you and I know, but there was a caste system.

On the other hand, you get persons going to work in offices and they held a number of established posts. Even though the numbers were limited, they had established posts and you could work along, get an established post and you would have permanent employment. You could go to the bank, take your letter, build on your toilet and bath but your colleague working in the same building because of the caste system who happened to be a casual worker could not enjoy the same benefits as a fellow Barbadian.

It was a bad thing, Sir. It did not allow for the social and economic mobility which we as Barbadians should want to encourage and which this Barbados Labour Party is committed to. The abolition of that caste system which was inherent in this concept of long-term casual workers has been the most fundamental aspect of public sector reform in this century, perhaps the most fundamental aspect since the Arawak. I am shocked to hear that many people fought against it, Sir. I do not know how any reasonable, decent or right-thinking persons could fight against it but I am all for the empowerment of those casual employees in Government.

From 1998, over 4 000 casual workers in Government received their letters of permanent employment. They did not all receive their letters in 1998 but things were set in train. This Administration therefore was able to empower properly and fully more people than they sent home. That is the contrast. We were not only content to keep people on the job but empower them, put them in a condition where their jobs meant something, where they could improve their lives and that of their families. We empowered more people than the Democratic Labour Party sent home.

12.00 noon

Sir, let me tell you a little more about what that conversion means because it is not just about giving a letter but there are practical and very tangible benefits. Sir, on the matter of pensions, a casual worker was not entitled to pension from the Government. When you left at age 60, you got a gratuity at a lower level and then you had – what some have described as the starvation gap – the gap between age 60 when you went home and age 65 when you got a national insurance pension. What this conversion has done, is to allow former casual employees, who are now public officers to have a higher gratuity as well as a Government pension.

Sir, take the example of a casual worker who was earning \$1 400 at retirement, he would have received a year's salary as gratuity, so \$1 400 and you go. Then, he

would not have been able to get a pension until age 65, so you go at age 60 and get your national insurance pension at age 65, based on your contributions. Now that we have abolished that dreadful caste system of employment, that same worker will be able to obtain a lump sum payment, by way of gratuity of \$29 000, based on that salary of \$1 400. He would also receive a Government pension until he reaches the age of 65 at which time the National Insurance pension would kick in, so there are pension benefits. Our people, Barbadians who have worked hard – and the casual workers are those who tend to be working on the outside in the sun and rain – will now be able to go home and enjoy the benefits in some form of gratitude, and some 'thank you' for their contribution to national development, on behalf of the Government and people of Barbados. Sir, that is only fair, and that was done under this Administration.

I already mentioned the matter of long-term credit. The reality is that a bank, Courts or Mannings will not give you credit unless they have some reasonable feeling that you will have a job in the long term. Sir, you will notice that from the moment this measure was implemented, persons who were hesitant to improve their houses, and do some additional things like that, have been able to go forward and make those changes. I see it in the areas that I represent, where in the villages and other districts, casual Government workers who were on shaky ground are now going forward with competence and investing in their future and the future of their children. Sir, that is empowerment, and that is what this Administration has done.

I should mention as well that this measure includes statutory boards and I am pleased to report that all of the statutory boards have now gone through the necessary step of sending letters. Some were faster than others but they have all done it now, so that even in the statutory boards, the concept and the reality of appointments have come home.

In addition to those four thousand persons that we had identified, we also increased the number of persons who were eligible for appointment otherwise. For example, in the year 1997, we appointed 691 persons giving them security of tenure, in 1998, 661, in 1999, 1 365, in 2000, 4 010 and in 2001 – that process continues so I do not have the full figures – 427 up to May. Sir, over a five-year period, approximately four and a half years, 7 154 persons would have had the benefit of stability and predictability. Certainly, by way of having a Government that says, we are willing to secure your future, we appreciate your work as public officers and therefore, we are empowering you. Sir, that is what we have done, by way of security.

During the time of this Administration as well, Sir, we recognised that there have been shortages of manpower in critical areas and we have therefore provided additional staff

to the extent possible for the police, the post offices, the prisons, the nursing service, customs, immigration and other vital areas of Government and we will do more, Sir, such as resources would allow.

In addition, Sir, recognising the great uncertainty which was created by the legislation cutting public servants' salaries by 8 per cent, we took the bold step of amending the Constitution of Barbados to ensure that no future Government could indiscriminately cut the wages of public officers in Barbados, because people need to have some confidence in their future. They will only give of their best, if that is the case. They also believe that there is a moral position in all this, so legislation giving protection to workers' wages was passed by this Parliament on the aegis of the Barbados Labour Party.

Sir, amendments have also been made to pensions legislation, making it possible for persons who were either temporary officers, or in temporary positions and acting for a period of time, to be able to qualify for pensions at the acting rate. Amendments were also made to clarify the issue of mobility between the civil service and statutory boards with respect to persons pension rights.

Sir, this matter of pension reform, obviously is an ongoing one on the national level, but even while that debate is going on, the Government recognises that it has a fundamental responsibility as an employer to treat its former workers by way of proper pensions. Indeed, Sir, as at last year, they were some 33 500 pensioners in Barbados, persons retired from both the private and public sectors and that number represents a significant body of persons, thousands which would have come from the Government. This means that we have to ensure that there is adequate provision for them to be able to continue to live in dignity.

It is unfortunately the case that too many of our former workers, both in the Government and in the private sector – but let us focus on the Government in this case – live in conditions of genteel poverty. The house may be decent because they had built a good house when they were working. They may or may not still have the car that they purchased prior to retirement, but the reduction in income on retirement, the dependence on a pension and the reality that when life expectancy was low, a gratuity and a pension could allow you to live in good circumstances for the short time you lived, the fact is, that the life expectancy is increasing and Barbados has one of the highest life expectancies in the world. I think it is 85 years for the women by now but the average is 78 overall. The women are higher and the men are lower.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I am advised that the men are about 76 and the women are around 80ish, but the average life expectancy is 78 years old. Sir, on average, a public

servant, retiring at age 60 has another 18 years to finance his livelihood. Remember, Sir, that the number of persons reaching 100 years old is increasing. Also, Sir, the number of persons reaching 90 years – we are reaching some very high notes, Sir, and the Governor-General is being kept very busy with his visits to centenarians.

Therefore, the matter of pensions for public officers, represents not only a matter of concern from an employer/employee relationship respectively, but from a national development and a social conscience perspective but, Sir, that is a matter for another debate.

Additionally, the matter of flexible responsibility allowance has also been addressed during the time of this Administration since 1995, and persons in the prison service, the police service and in the nursing service have received increased allowances which recognise the fact, that given the nature of their work, they are often required to work extra hours or overtime, which would not usually arise in other sectors. Therefore, there are several hourly and monthly rates which have been devised with which the prison officers, nurses and police forces, particularly, are quite happy.

Of course, Sir, much has been said about the job evaluation exercise which has been undertaken as part of the public reform exercise. This has gone on apace as well. The first phase of the comprehensive job evaluation exercise has been completed and Phase 2 is now underway, which is intended to establish relative worth for all jobs in the public sector and ensure that adequate wages are paid.

Sir, the other reality we have to face is that we in Barbados as the public sector, happen to be in competition, not only with the private sector for the best brains and best talents available to us, we are also in competition with other countries in the region and in the wider world. As we would have seen most recently, teachers are being openly recruited to go to the United States to work. There was a smaller recruitment drive years ago, for Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Aruba and other places but the United States has just joined in. Nurses are being recruited to go to the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Our welders and others are recruited to go to work in the oil fields as far away as Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. Our information technology specialists are being recruited to work in various places in the world.

Sir, an honest objective look has to be made to ensure that as the public sector of Barbados, we are able to establish salary levels and benefits, such as would make sure that our institutional capacity as a Government being able to do all that needs to be done, is not impaired because we are

uncompetitive as far as our salaries and benefits are concerned. Sir, that is an ongoing exercise, in which the fullest cooperation has been given by the unions and others in Barbados. Sir, as I indicated earlier, the settlement which we are being asked to approve, by way of the increases for public officers on this occasion, were submissions made to the Government, prior to September 11, 2001.
12.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the National Emergency and Economic Programme having been completed, negotiations proceeded. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, negotiations were held with the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) representing a wide cross-section of workers in the public service. This included: Barbados Workers' Union (BWU), Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union (BSTU), Barbados Association of Principals of Public/Secondary Schools (BAPPSS), Barbados Association of Public/Primary Schools Principals, (BAPPSP), Barbados Fire Officers Association (BFOA), Barbados Prison Officers Association (BPOA), Nurses and Nursing Aids Assistants of Barbados (NAAB), Barbados Registered Nurses Association (BRNA), Royal Barbados Police Association (RBPA), Barbados Union of Teachers (BUT) which was negotiated under CTUSAB but the National Union of Public Workers opted to negotiate separately.

Sir, after several rounds of discussions where the unions advanced their proposals and the Government advanced its counter-proposals, again based on the fundamental principles, we could not agree to a settlement which was unaffordable, which would cause the Government to either borrow or to raise taxes to finance. We believe our increases in salaries have to be able to be financed through the natural growth of revenue and that the level of increase must not impact negatively on our regional or international competitiveness.

Sir, for persons employed by Government constitutes a significant share of Government's Expenditure. As indicated, that is understandable, given the wide range of goods and services provided. It also means that Expenditure on Wages and Salaries constitutes one of the items that we need to watch.

It is projected, based on the Estimates of the Current Year, that over \$700 million will be spent on Wages and Salaries in the public service during the coming year and one can, therefore, understand the impact this increase would have on the overall Expenditure. What has been agreed by the vast majority of unions participating in this exercise, is that a settlement of 3 per cent in the first year and 2.75 per cent in the second year, equally 5.75 per cent over a two-year period, is a fair and reasonable settlement.

Ideally, the Government would have preferred to have had full concurrence of all the unions involved in the process but the reality is that we cannot allow a situation in which the majority of unions have agreed, for us to hold up the process and prevent the benefits from being passed onto the workers in the public sector of Barbados.

Indeed, it is interesting to note that CTUSAB, as the principal bargaining body of Government, have agreed to this very fair and reasonable settlement but the National Union of Public Workers and the Barbados Union of Teachers have held out. It must be noted though, this does not appear to represent the wide view of the public servants in Barbados. In fact, the National Union of Public Workers, in seeking to call a general meeting in order to get a mandate on this matter was, in the first instance, not able to secure a quorum out of its seven thousand members. The rules of the organisation, however, provides that if a meeting is called and a quorum is not obtained, automatically the meeting is adjourned to the same time, same place, and that whatever number turns up will make up that quorum.

Sir, were it not for that flexibility in the rules, the level of support for the leadership of the NUPW and the position taken on this matter was so low or non-existent, that they would not have been able to convene a meeting in order to discuss the matter.

Of course, I do not know what we can say about the matter as it relates to the stance taken by the Barbados Union of Teachers (BUT), except to say that their decision was taken at a meeting which comprised approximately 30 workers. We also know the very close coincidence of interest between the leadership of the BUT and those persons having political aspiration by way of representation in St. Michael South East might be a contributing factor in this matter.
12.20 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, I am only speculating in this matter. I really do not know for sure.

Sir, the Congress of Trade Union and Staff Association have agreed and we are satisfied that the settlement is fair and reasonable. The settlement will cost the Government \$50.5 million over the two years in additional salaries, wages and other benefits such as National Insurance contributions, transfers, pensions and increase allowances. All public workers will happily benefit in soon time from these measures which are proposed. I want to express greatest regret that the leadership of the National Union of Public Workers and the Barbados Union of Teachers have not taken the enlightened approach and

worked with their colleagues in CTUSAB to come to this agreement but, as I have said, other interests and agendas may be influencing some of these decisions.

Sir, in addition to the wages component of this settlement there are some other aspects relating to conditions of service which were also agreed as part of these negotiations.

First we agreed that pensions and the entitlement of officers should be put beyond doubt and that the right to a pension would be established as a point of law. The relevant legislation to give effect to this will come in the not too distant future. There have been concerns expressed by the workers about the way the law is currently written and in previous years it has been the subject of contributions by Honourable Members in this Chamber concerning the need to have this matter addressed and now the right to pensions will be established.

Sir, representation was also made concerning the status of part-time teachers in terms of what happens to their pay on public holidays. Part-time teachers were not entitled to pay when they were not able to work on public holidays falling within the school term and it was agreed, based on ILO Convention 175, that workers should not be disadvantaged solely on the basis that their employment is not full time. Therefore, the same benefits that accrue to full-time employees would accrue to part-time teachers and they would be paid for those bank holidays.

Sir, there were also proposals advanced concerning the matter of compensation for persons injured at work. I will present some of these proposals and the others will be presented by the Attorney General whose Ministry is most impacted by these proposals.

Sir, Government already pays \$50 million per year to the National Insurance Scheme to cover its workers and, therefore, workers are able to have entitlement there. Additionally, under the Crown Proceedings Act, workers who are injured on the job are able to obtain benefits and during 1998/99 over \$770 000 was paid out to 13 public officers injured on the job. This shows that Government looks after its workers in the line of duty. Sir, these were some of the things made and agreed to.

Sir, the vast majority of public officers in Barbados recognise the constraints which attend Government's finances. The vast majority of public officers are happy and willing to accept Government's offer of 5.75% over the two-year period. They recognise that this offer exceeds the level of inflation which has occurred during the time.

They also recognise and appreciate the work which has been done by this Administration by way of improving the security of tenure of public officers in Barbados.

They recognise that they have received an increase in each and every pay settlement since 1995 under the Barbados Labour Party unlike the loss of jobs and income under the Democratic Labour Party between 1991 and early 1994 and they are not willing to join with the leadership of the National Union of Public Workers and the Barbados Union of Teachers who were left standing alone by way of their stance on these proposals.

Sir, a great song and dance will be created by the Opposition, as is their right, concerning this business about legislating salaries. I want to say to the public that the increases can only be paid if they are legislated and whether there is full or partial agreement, the process of legislation has to be gone through.

Let me also say that this is not a situation in which a deal had been struck with a minority grouping and an unrepresentative body to the detriment of the larger and more representative body. Across the diversity of interest represented by the various entities including the Barbados Workers Union, Barbados Secondary Teachers Union, Barbados Association of Principals and Public Primary Schools, Barbados Association of Public Secondary Schools, Barbados Fire Officers Association, Barbados Prison Officers Association, Nurses Aides Assistants and Barbados Registered Nurses, there has been agreement. Therefore, we see no difficulty in ensuring that the matter is brought to a happy and speedy conclusion by way of what is being proposed to this House of Assembly.
12.30 p.m.

Sir, it is against that background that we have brought these measures today. The background of having recognised and agreed to treat the Congress of Trade Union and Staff Associations as an umbrella body for public workers in representing their interest, against the background of treating the Congress of Trade Union and Staff Associations of Barbados in matters relating to social partnership, social and economic policy, consultations on a wide range of matters that we think are consistent, that we should continue to treat that body in the matter of negotiations, Sir.

We are satisfied that the revision that has been set out to the public servants of Barbados and the very firm positive steps which have been taken to give effect to that separates us from the other Side. As I indicated that while they cut wages and jobs, we increased wages and jobs. While they had no vision for the public sector in national development, we had sought to give them tools. We have, during the tenure of this administration, improved not only the conditions that I have mentioned but improved the physical conditions in which public sector workers perform their day-to-day functions.

Sir, because of the neglect of public buildings during the Democratic Labour Party's period of administration, we have not been able to bring all of them to the standard that we would think is acceptable. In fact, I want to thank and salute any public officers who may still be functioning in surroundings which are less than ideal.

Mr. Speaker, we have done repairs to the police stations, fire stations and office buildings. For example the Treasury Building has been refitted; work was done on the former National Insurance Building; work was done on several blocks of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital; court buildings, even though we are building a new court complex; work was done on the schools to improve the conditions under which teachers and children function; work was done on the markets, not only for the staff that function there but also for the vendors and general public. In all of the many places where the public servants of Barbados function, there has been clear evidence of a strong commitment to improve the conditions, not only in pay as it relates to contract terms of their employment but the physical conditions under which they work. We gave them the commitment that process continues.

The Government intends to be a model employer by way of the quality of the environment in which the public officers function. For example, clean air, ergonomic furniture, devices to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome as a result of the use of the computer and all the comforts that are possible are included in these repairs and new structures which we have provided. Sir, that is to be contrasted against the harsh conditions under which the public servants were required to function during the period of the Democratic Labour Party administration.

Sir, our record is very clear. We have already brought notice to this Parliament the Report of a Committee which we have established to look at the development of a new Public Service Act. Sir, you are aware that the legal framework which governs the administration of the public sector is archaic. It was built for another place and another time. It has served us well insofar as it will go but it is no longer the tool for the times. The matter of treating the discipline of the public service, treating recruitment, promotion, job evaluation, terms of condition of work, functioning of the various services commissions that administer the public sector, the roles of Permanent Secretaries and other public officers and the use of information technology to change the way government work, are matters which are being addressed in the new Public Service Act.

Other aspects of Public Sector Reform have been successfully implemented and have gone a long way towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of the public service. Sir, not enough can be

said about such matters and we have to take credit for not letting the wider public know of the things that have been done.

Sir, the introduction of information technology by way of what is called the Smart Stream Programme for financial management as well as for Human Resource Management, brings the Civil Service of Barbados into the 21st Century. We now have a situation in which a significant number of Ministries are online. We had some teething problems last year as we were using both the traditional manual system and the new system. Sir, as of this current financial year, all should be well with the new system. We now have a financial accounting package which prevents Ministries from being able, inadvertently or otherwise, to overspend their votes or misreport expenditure that should have been recorded in one category or another. It allows the Ministry of Finance to have an oversight of expenditure patterns and needs, across industries and it provides for greater accountability. Sir, it also provides for a more efficient administration of public expenditure. That is important not only for expenditure management but also to help the public sector recover from some of the not so good reputation that it has developed by the way it pays third parties for goods and services. Over the years concerns were raised by individuals and the private sector regarding the time it takes for government to make payments for goods and services rendered. The use of the introduction of the Smart Stream has improved that situation. Training has been provided for financial officers and other public officers to ensure that they are able to utilise the technology.

The Smart Stream has also been used for the Human Resource Management component in the public sector. Therefore, a more accurate and timely record of persons employed, which their relative skills and interests will allow for a more effective and efficient assignment of officers to various posts. It will ensure that their relevant skills are not overlooked when persons are considered for internal promotions and various other efficiencies.

Changes have been made as well to the Financial Administration and Audit Act to allow for what is the basic practice in the private sector but for Government is a major concern.

12.40 p.m.

There was a time when officers based overseas could not use a Government credit card to make purchases and those are the things that comfort officers in their performance of their duties. As you know, Sir, if you are overseas and you are not functioning with a credit card you are not functioning. Therefore, some of the impediments by way of structural impediments, institutional impediments, administrative and legal impediments which had impinged

negatively on the ability of officers to function, have been removed.

There is no hesitance, no reluctance, no lack of will. Indeed, to the contrary, the reform and empowerment of the public sector of Barbados has several components including this component of ensuring that a fair day's pay is given for a fair day's work. I want to say, Sir, that we also have to bear in mind the continued need to improve productivity in the public sector as well as in Barbados generally but our ability to afford these increases will turn not just on revenue growth but on continued improvements in productivity. That, Sir, is a perpetual objective within the public sector administration, not only in Barbados but across the world to strive to improve the productivity of the public sector, to enable it to do more with less so as to be able to afford wage increases and not have a negative impact on the economy.

In that regard, of course, Sir, the work of the National Productivity Council must be lauded. During the course of the last year and in previous years programmes have been mounted jointly with several ministries and statutory boards within Government to improve productivity, to measure it as well as to devise schemes of pay in some statutory boards which have a productivity incentive component in it. These are the areas in which innovation has to be encouraged. These are the areas in which we have to make an attempt to link benefits and productivity because that will make the difference between long-term success and long-term failure.

Sir, I will end as I began and that is by indicating that it is my assessment that the workers within the public sector are deserving of every cent of this increase. It is clear that their contribution by way of the quality of their service, their steadfastness and dedication to duty has contributed to our national development.

We know, of course, where the pockets that require improvement are, we know that there are some departments and individuals who are not where they ought to be in terms of the level of service and the like. In the aggregate, Sir, the system works. The public service works and it delivers the goods and we have all benefitted in one means or another from this particular measure.

I want to reiterate the point that the matter of the conclusion of salary arrangements must come to Parliament and that this is not the first nor indeed will it be the last time that there has not been total agreement between the Government and the unions in these matters. In fact, I believe it was in 1974 that there was no agreement when salaries were legislated. They were imposed in an atmosphere of acrimony between the Government of the day and the unions of that time. No such acrimony exists on this particular occasion.

I, therefore, am pleased to support this Resolution. Indeed, as I would have indicated at the beginning of the debate to give legal effect to the proposed increases across the various categories of workers, resolutions in support of the various categories are required, one category for general officers, another for judges, one for the police service. There are ten such orders before us today. By agreement and with the cooperation of the Opposition with which we consulted earlier we will have a single debate where persons are free to deal with any and all of these categories in the Resolution and we will then proceed to deal with the passage of the resolutions one by one.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this Resolution concerning the 5.75 per cent increase in the salaries and wages of public officers to this Parliament and to indicate as well that it is Government's intention to make adjustments to various categories of pensions and other allowances at the same time as these increases, to make known that this is just one more occasion on which this Barbados Labour Party has responded positively to the needs and the concerns of the public officers of Barbados by way of yet another increase. It is the seventh such consecutive increase over the past several years and we remain committed to the ongoing development of the public sector and it is in that spirit, Sir, that I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.15 p.m. today.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: 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.

12.48 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, in the past two weeks, this Chamber would have been regaled with two presentations by the Honourable Member Christ Church East and if his physique did not differ significantly from the person who would normally present these matters before this Chamber, I would have great difficulty in trying to distinguish the two characters. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East has assumed a new personality since coming into this Chamber. It is not one which he had when he was in the other Chamber. I congratulate him for the

ease with which has been able to assume that personality much as I would say, I prefer the older one or the previous one because, Sir, it was more balanced. It was not as consumed by the Democratic Labour Party past, present, or future. It was not as insecure and it was not as inspired to ramble on and on – not only about matters which have no relevance to the well-being of ordinary Barbadians – but in a real sense, some matters which have very little relevance to the subject of governance in Barbados in the year 2002. Sir, even though they may be relevant to the debate, in your judgement and I think you are quite right because it is an economic debate, they are strictly speaking, old hat things that politicians of an era that has almost passed, have regurgitated time and time again in this Chamber and, as I say, Honourable Members are now being challenged once again by somebody who is essentially facing an identity crisis.

Sir, that crisis is not one shared by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. I must say that through all of the leadership trials and tribulations, she has maintained the same personality that she had when she first came into this Chamber. The crisis which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East is having in this debate, and in the one last week, is that he deems it necessary to launch some very unfortunate, almost terrible broadsides on persons who cannot respond in these debates, for very basic reasons. The reason is so characteristic of the way this Government functions, and so repugnant to democracy in Barbados, the fact that it has raised its ugly head on two occasions, needs to be placed in the public domain for scrutiny.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East launched a broadside on two people in this debate, simply because they disagreed with the Government. That is all they have done and in the context of this administration, with 26 seats in this Chamber, elected with a full mandate in 1999, with very little Opposition in terms of numbers on this Side...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If you want to say that, you are free to say that also but even if you say it or otherwise and you are content and you would like to see no Opposition at all, I think it is a disgrace for any debate to be characterised by criticism of people who cannot respond, simply because they disagree with the views of the Government.

Sir, this is not a crime. In a democracy, union leaders, trade union leaders, members of the private sector, even Members of the Government – they have been some on the Backbench though few and far between – have a right as citizens to disagree with the Government. This is not new. On the past three occasions that the Government has had to use the method of legislating salaries, unions have disagreed.

The difference is that on this occasion, one of the trade union leaders is a woman who is very forceful. Perhaps it is that she is a woman and therefore, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East may believe that, by virtue of that, she does not rise to the level of competence, which he would attach to the other men with whom he has to negotiate matters of this sort.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, in a democracy like ours, I think it is disgraceful that people who are undertaking their public duties as elected representatives of trade unions, acting on the instruction of their members or in their own judgment, for them to be criticised simply because they disagree with the Government of Barbados.

Sir, this is a growing trend; every occasion that anyone takes any position that, in any way, contradicts the views of this Government, every attempt is made to snap out that criticism and to ensure the Government smothers that individual with its views as if that individual has committed some kind of political crime.

Sir, I would not join in that level of Debate. If I were to do so I would have to draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact that not everybody shares his perception. There are some persons who are drawing the opposite analogy and who have come to conclusion about the persons who have agreed with the Government. I am not going to raise that in this Debate but it is logical that just as there are some who are going to be critical of the Government, there is also going to be a perception of those who had agreed with the Government. There is a public perception and a strong one which, at the end of the day, may have a devastating impact on the trade unions of Barbados, if it is not stemmed and dealt with. It is hanging over other participants in the process who have willingly agreed with the Government in this particular settlement. That public verdict is not for me to announce from this Chamber. The members of the respective unions or the public, as a whole, will have a right to resolve those issues.

Sir, secondly what I found to be amazing in respect to this Debate was the fact that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, actually believes himself when the Honourable Member said the vast majority of public servants are happy with the particular result of these negotiations. They are satisfied and do not want anymore, because the Government has given them exactly what they wanted. They are happy with the illusion and though the unions themselves could not convene adequate numbers to determine whether they were in favour or against the increase, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East was able, by some process, to work out that because the Honourable Member sat around a table with fifteen men and

came to a conclusion about what civil servants would want, that those are the negotiations with which the civil servants are satisfied.

Sir, if the Honourable Member for Christ Church East believes that, then it is a terrible commentary on the operations of this Government. I have to ask the Honourable Member whether he believes the civil servants are satisfied with the increase they have got and want nothing more. I also have to ask the Honourable Member for Christ Church East whether he does not hear, as I do, from several civil servants, that it is pointless attending meetings with the unions to put forward their position because, at the end of the day, the Government of Barbados still plays off one union against the other, as it has done on the past three occasions and legislated salaries on the basis that it had been able to get the majority of individual unions to agree to the position which the Government wants and which has happened in this case.

Sir, there are many civil servants who do not bother. They are so dissatisfied with the process that they do not go to union meetings to put forward their cases. If they take a case that is against the Government, not only is the likelihood that they would be victimised because the history of public service negotiations in Barbados tells a story of many civil servants who have taken tough stances and have spent the rest of their lives being frightened.

There was a Member of Parliament who used to be frightened, who had to be careful, because he had marched with civil servants. Sir, that Minister was at the level of Parliament and was insulated by the Parliamentary Privilege and Immunity Act but who was still nervous years after because that Member had participated in a march with civil servants.

Yet, one would expect that a clerical officer in a small Government department to stand up at a union meeting and to declare that she is totally dissatisfied with the fact that this Government has squandered millions of dollars in Greenland, GEMS of Barbados Project and now that the revenues are down, Government expects us civil servants to hold strain. That clerical officer might not wish that because, by her own action, when she returns to work she would have determined her future status in the public service by the fact she took that tough and uncompromising stance.

Sir, what is the basis on which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East can come in this Chamber with such confidence and tell us the vast majority of public officers do not want anymore money? They are satisfied with the negotiations and have agreed to the position being taken by Government.

Sir, since they do not attend union meetings, the vast majority of public officers do not even know the level of wage increase they are getting. The civil servants are so

frustrated that all they want to know is when would the money be paid. To them, the most important question is when are they going to receive it so they can cope with such things as VAT, September when their children have to go back to school, car loans, buy car tyres, or make basic ends meet. It is frightening to discover that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, having discussed at a meeting with fifteen persons around a table that, at the end of the day, that represents a consensus of public opinion by all the civil servants who are happy to receive an increase of the size which the Government has granted to them.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East has said – I have to use the words carefully because the Member did not say ‘the Leader of the Opposition’, neither did the Honourable Member identify any individual in the Chamber or out – the Opposition is going to make a song and dance about the question of legislating salaries and about all kinds of other issues. There is no song and dance in this Debate.

If the Addendum to the Resolution said that the Government and trade union represented by CTUSAB have agreed to the settlement, this would place me in a position, as it has in previous Debates, in relation to previous negotiations in Barbados, where I cannot, since I do not speak on behalf of either the Government or the trade union movement in Barbados, presume either to contradict that or to fight for better terms.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East has said the civil servants are happy with what they have gotten. The Addendum said the Government has agreed, CTUSAB has agreed and he is fully confident that, at the end of the day, the vast majority of civil servants are happy and satisfied with the settlement, paltry though it is.

Sir, if the Honourable Member for Christ Church East can tell us that, the most that one can say is, to God be the Glory. Amen. That is my approach to this Debate. That is, to my mind, the only way one can credibly respond to what we have heard from the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and unless one is contradicted by the voices of individual civil servants or other groups of civil servants then, at face value, I would have to accept what the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has said in this Debate.

Sir, on previous occasions when our Foreign Reserves were declining, when the Barbados economy had not been enjoying the level of sustained economic growth it has enjoyed over the past eight years, when at that time, the Government would not say the future was as bright as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has said on previous occasions, when our economy was going through

almost an economic crisis, not even with the prospects which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East said were on the horizon for the Barbados economy, the trade union movement was fighting for large increases. In other words, the prospects were not as great but the trade union movement was fighting for more. One can think of how many occasions that has happened and on how many occasions they got increases which were even more significant than the paltry sums being offered by way of these Resolutions before this Chamber.

Sir, if the trade union movement, as represented by CTUSAB said they are satisfied with the proposed increases as announced today, the Government has a 26-to-2 majority and even if one on this Side were to disagree, the Government said this is what the civil servants wanted. The Government has given them what they wanted and, at the end of the day, it would not be for me to seek to contradict that position.

This increase, to my mind, hardly deserves the kind of recompense that civil servant who one meets on the street daily deserves, in respect of the hardships they had been enduring in this economy, as previously alluded to.

Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member for Christ Church East believes those concerns are going to be erased by this particular increase of 3 per cent in the first instance, and 2 per cent in the second, then I am not going to be one to contradict that impression. What I will say is that I have been receiving mixed signals. The individual public officers with whom I speak, do not take that position. They were expecting something more significant and had justification for expecting it because, at the end of the day, they would be recompensed for the sacrifices they have made so that we could enjoy those eight successive years of economic growth. They would be receiving recompense for the fact that Barbados has a high credit rating, which was the big issue last week – how wonderful our credit rating is. How Standard and Poor's said this economy is so well managed. It is not just the Member for St. Peter and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East who have a say in the management of the economy, it is the civil servants who are managing this economy well, who have given the Honourable Member for Christ Church East the opportunity to say the highest recommendation the Honourable Member could find is that of Standard and Poor's on Barbados' high credit rating.

Sir, but with 2 per cent and 3 per cent increase, when one comes to the negotiating table, is the highest rating of recompense that the public officers in Barbados could receive for the contribution they have made to that high credit rating which Barbados currently enjoys.

Sir, let us not talk about the high credit rating but of the high levels of Foreign Reserves. The Government has boasted of the high levels of Foreign Reserves. Nobody on

this Side has contradicted that.
2.35 p.m.

Sir, nobody has contradicted that on this Side. We have it because of foreign borrowing and foreign investment in the Barbados economy. This investment comes because of the level of economic management and also because, according to the Honourable Member for the City, Barbados is the model of a country that is well-managed with hard working civil servants who contribute much to our development but yet when the goodies are being distributed after all the hard work to sustain the Barbados model, the public officers are told that revenue is down, that VAT is not performing well, that the Government can find money for Greenland and the GEMS Project and to throw away in all kinds of organisations. Sir, the Government is borrowing money from the banking system, knocking down buildings, leaving the properties idle for years, there is also wastage, squandermania and lack of accountability but when they go to the negotiating table they tell public officers that the VAT revenues are down.

The September 11th crisis came and the public officers' negotiations had to be put on hold because we were facing a crisis even though the Minister of Tourism said it was not a crisis because the level of tourism performance is higher than expected. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East told us there was a turnaround in international business and we heard that the economy was starting to fire up again but when they got to the negotiating table with the civil servants they are told that the VAT revenues are down. Therefore, an increase of 3 per cent in the first year and 2.75 per cent in the second year represents a reasonable position and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East said that the vast majority of civil servants agreed with the increase because he knows something that the remainder of the Chamber does not yet know.

Sir, if the Government says that the civil servants are happy with this amount, to God be the glory, because the Government has the majority so even if ten Members in here disagree, they will still be able to pass this Resolution comfortably and, according to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, the civil servants would be satisfied with this windfall of 3 per cent in the first year and 2.75 per cent in the second year.

Sir, there are countries in the Caribbean that are facing economy crises or reduced revenue and the first thing they did was to look at expenditure patterns in Government. Some countries have reduced the size of the Cabinet but we have the luxury of having the largest Cabinet in the history of Cabinet Government in Barbados. Sir, some of these countries are reducing travel by Government delegations and Ministers and they are also reducing the kinds of

vehicles that Government buys because they recognise that they have to divert the priorities of their expenditure.

Sir, I am referring to these things but I am not asking the Government to divert anything because the Minister said that the civil servants are happy with this settlement so I am merely pointing out for the sake of reference so that if anyone reads this debate 20 years from now and wanted to know what the economic climate in the Caribbean was, he would discover that other Governments, in an attempt to deal with some of the areas of core expenditure to ensure that workers are not laid off and there is no negative impact on the public sector, have looked at the area of discretionary expenditure.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East said that the majority of civil servants are totally satisfied with the amount the Government is giving to them. I am personally surprised that this is all the Government could offer when I reflect on the money this Government has spent over the past few years and is presently spending because they have been able to borrow. In three months time the same public officers who have had to accept this paltry increase, with which the Minister said they are satisfied, will carry out an analysis of the expenditure patterns of this Government and recognise that millions of dollars are going to be found over the next few months for a variety of 'pre-election' activities as well as a continuation of expenditure patterns in 'previous-election' activities as well, yet Government was not able to find the kind of money to give workers a decent raise.

Sir, I am not in a position to know more than the negotiating parties who sat at the table with the Honourable Member but if they believe that this is all that the Government can offer and that this is what the civil servants deserve at this time in our economic development then, who am I to question their judgement? Sir, I am not going to question the judgement of those who agree with the Government nor will I do what the Honourable Member for Christ Church East did and expose my intolerance or arrogance by questioning the judgement of those who disagree with the Government. I believe both of them had reasons with varying degrees of validity for the respected positions that they took.

A plea, Sir, since they were not represented at the table, would have to be put in for the pensioners of Barbados in particular, because they were not represented at these talks but their case would deserve special mention.
2.45 p.m.

Despite all that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East said today, pensioners in Barbados as well as a large number of public officers are struggling under immense pressure.

The Honourable Member's comments about the cost of living are irrelevant because we all know that the index which is used and the basket of goods that is covered to determine the increase of the cost of living in Barbados does not include a large number of activities which previously were not subject to the VAT but which are now subject to the VAT.

Sir, for the Honourable Member to come in here and to trot out statistics relative to the cost of living, is not taking into account that a large number of services which the pensioners in Barbados require are now taxed by way of the Value Added Tax and the burden of taxation overall in Barbados has had quite an impact on them.

The Government would argue that they came up with a basket of goods that would be relieved of VAT but a lot of pensioners in Barbados suffer with chronic diseases for which a large number of goods in that basket would be inimical to the kind of lifestyle that they should be leading. Therefore, they are required to get special diets. Many of them have the high cost of medical care because the public medical system is in a shamble. They have to look to the private health care system to get the level of health care that they desire and on top of that they have to pay for the special diets and other trauma associated with the problems of the chronic disease that they suffer, and the cost of living in Barbados is high.

Sir, if the Honourable Member would simply take a trip to any Caribbean island and compare the relative cost of basic food items as well as apparel, food in supermarkets and the public markets, boutiques and discount shops, he would recognise that the cost of living in Barbados is high. Many pensioners in Barbados also support able-bodied young people who may be out of work or who are living with pensioners because they cannot find housing elsewhere. These are the realities in Barbados of the chronic shortage of housing.

Sir, I have to ask the Honourable Member where is it that he shops? Where is it that the Honourable Members of the Government shop that they can tell the public of Barbados that inflation has been kept in check and that by and large salaries in Barbados have kept pace with the increase in the cost of living? Sir, for the Honourable Member to say that would mean that he purchases no services that have attracted the Value Added Tax since 1997. All of those services that were brought under the Value Added Tax net, the Honourable Member would have had to avoid since 1997 for him to be able to say that the cost of living in Barbados and the impact of the VAT and of taxation generally has been benign.

Sir, the plight of pensioners in Barbados requires special attention. The increase that has been given by way of the Resolution which is before the House which amounts to \$20 a month, is simply not enough in terms of the impact of the cost of living and the range of services that pensioners in this country need to purchase.

Sir, I think that I have dealt with most of the issues. I said at the beginning that this Debate is not a happy one for me because if I were to take what the Honourable Member for Christ Church East said at face value, the Government is pleased as punch that it is able to bring before this Chamber a paltry increase in public sector wages. The critics of it are people not to be associated with, simply because they criticised it. The union leaders who refused to be associated with it have attracted some scar on their characters because they refused to accept the Government's position in relation to the increases that have been offered. The vast majority of public servants, according to him, are satisfied with the increase, and do not want anymore money, and the Government believes that in the context of expenditure patterns by the Government, that this is a reasonable allocation of expenditure.

In other words, if the Government had to make a choice between spending money on increasing public sector wages and throwing more money into dubious projects or increasing expenditure on organisations and in areas where there is little accountability, this Government would prefer to spend that money there rather than to increase the salaries and wages of public officers in this country.

Therefore, if the Honourable Member believes that having got the negotiators to agree with him that they have perfectly interpreted the public workers' messages to them, that the position of the workers was correctly interpreted by the trade union leaders and that their agreement at the end of the day represents what the workers want, as I said at the beginning, 'To God be the Glory' it would not be for me to question it.

In any event, the Government has a majority and it does not have to use any might to get its measures through this Chamber. It is said that the Parties have agreed and I said 'good for them'. In my personal judgement, I believe that the Government could have offered more against the background of the state of the Barbados economy; that the negotiators for the workers settled on these terms either because the Government itself had threatened to legislate salaries in any event or if it did not threaten, by its past conduct it had legislated salaries, therefore what they had to say in the matter did not matter. With respect of the vast majority of public servants, I believe that is the perspective that they have on the state of these particular negotiations.

Sir, as I said at the beginning, I believe that this debate is one of those debates in which it will, certainly not fall from my mouth, contradict what the Honourable Member said is his position and the vast majority of public servants agree and are satisfied with this offer. If the Honourable Member believes that, he should be free to continue to live in that delusion until such time as the public servants had a chance to determine that issue for themselves.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself with the remarks of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East who has ably introduced these Resolutions before this Honourable House. I want to start by saying that I believe that it would be appropriate for us to thank the unions and the public servants for an action which was taken late last year, which recognised that in the post-September 11th environment, given the uncertainty of what has transpired, they agreed to put on hold wage negotiations such as to allow us the benefit of the passage of time so as to be able to better manage the affairs of the improvement of the terms and conditions of workers but in particular, the level of salary increases.

I want to place that on record at the start of my speech because I think that it reflects the signals – a level of maturity that is to be found in this society, for the most part, and it also reflects the general social contract that we have tried to mirror by our agreement to consensus building wherever possible. Indeed, the Fourth Protocol which has recently been signed in the last few months also proceed from that same philosophy. Mr. Speaker, in so thanking the public servants and the unions for that forbearance, I also want to thank them in the most part for allowing us to reach an agreement that takes account of Barbados' economic circumstances as they are at this stage and that allows us to ensure that the level of increase being given to them is more than the inflation being recorded and to ensure that the pattern which began when this Government came into office in 1995 can be continued. That is, that in almost every instance since 1995 we have ensured that the wage increases have in fact outstripped the level of inflation facing the country.

2.55 p.m.

I want to go further because the Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke in terms that should not surprise any of us. He is the Leader of the Opposition, not of a political party. He is the leader of an opposition belonging to a political party that is struggling in the wilderness in which there is much confusion on many things and therefore it is not surprising to me that he should also be confused as to what is appropriate behaviour in these economic climes that we are facing in this country. There are some countries as he was wont to refer to in his speech in the Caribbean that cannot pay public servants their monthly salaries. Far from

being not able to pay public servants their monthly salaries this Government has committed to doing something that that party to which he belongs never did.

In the face of economic negative growth, instead of sending home workers, this Government has committed itself to maintaining the employment of public servants and not only have we committed ourselves to maintaining the employment of public servants but we have also found it possible to bridge the gap that will occur by reason of inflation with a wage increase that is 3 per cent in the first year and 2.75 per cent in the second year. A wage increase, Mr. Speaker, that in anybody's terms, even when the economy was growing was in the ball park of the settlements reached between 1995 and 2001 when the economy was growing. Not only do we not send home public servants but we ensure that there is a wage settlement that is commensurate with one that was given at a time when the economy was growing.

I want also to engage one quick point before moving on to the substance of my speech, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition once again – and as I said it should not surprise us because when he has nothing to say he reverts to his litany of woes as to what is discretionary expenditure that he disagrees with. For those who are either politically naive or politically ignorant or both, the reality is that to try and draw attention to expenditure in a Government in building productive capacity and say that that expenditure can be diverted on salaries is to put us back in the same position that the Democratic Labour Party took us in 1991 and 1990. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that the Democratic Labour Party in 1990 carried us out to sea, dropped us in the ocean without a life jacket and then said, "Swim ashore!"

The point that I am making is simply that Government's overall budget is \$2.4 billion. Because Government's overall budget is \$2.4 billion you do not spend all \$2.4 billion on salaries, on the same item. Not only is it fiscal recklessness but it is also being elevated to the public as something which they should respect as a view from a leader of an opposition but I would only remind the public, Mr. Speaker, that the silly season truly has begun and, therefore, it is necessary for the Leader of the Opposition to speak to things in a way that does not relate to reality. I would like to think that if he were ever responsible for the Ministry of Finance again that bears no relation to anything that he himself would do because, Mr. Speaker, I would tell you that politics aside it would be a frightening day if a Government of Barbados would suddenly agree to wage increases that do not bear any proportion to the productivity of the entities concerned.

This Government will exercise fiscal prudence and also a commitment to the welfare of workers by ensuring that we can give increases that take into account inflation but, at the end of the day, that must bear some relationship to increases

in productivity because if you do not do that and you just lick out all that you have, a day will come when it would catch up with you because unless you spend discretionary income in building productive capacity you cannot expand the earning power of the national effort. If you cannot expand the earning power of the national effort, there will be no growth in the economy such as to allow improvements in the quality of life.

I can give you chapter and verse, Sir, that I can increase somebody's salary this year by 'nuff' and the next year by 'nuff' but at some point you will run out of the money unless you are also earning at the same time. Therefore, to speak about GEMS which is still providing hotel accommodation and has the capacity to ensure that this Government earns valuable foreign exchange so that it is contributing to the productive capacity of this country, to speak of the other things that he referred to, is to ignore the fact that one of the fundamental responsibilities of a government is also to ensure that the productive capacity of the nation is enhanced such that it can sustain the improvements in the quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to settle that issue because as I said, it is for the politically naive and the politically ignorant to believe that you can increase salaries just so. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition did not tell you why the Democratic Labour Party did not choose to deal with discretionary expenditure in 1991 and 1992. CARSICOT was discretionary expenditure but instead of cutting the subsidies to CARSICOT they sent home 3 000 workers. 3.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, instead of cutting the money for Sherbourne which was built out of a contingency vote, with no accountability, they sent home 3 000 workers and cut people's salaries in the public service by 8 per cent. I want some sense to come back to it and on the point about the unions who agreed and who do not agree, nobody is disputing any body's right in a democracy to disagree, but the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, has a right to draw to the attention of the public, the fact that the President of the Barbados Union of Teachers (BUT) does not agree to anything coming from this Government. Sir, one is left to wonder whether her political agenda, as a Vice President of the Democratic Labour Party does not carry a higher weight in her decision-making process than her commitment to the interest of teachers.

Mr. Speaker, I can only say that if I belonged to the BUT Executive, I would be a very worried and concerned person in Barbados tonight, that after the matter of wage negotiations, there is no issue more fundamental to a union's existence than wage negotiations, and if I call a meeting and I cannot even get a quorum at the first meeting and then, at

the second meeting, my rules allow me to proceed, whether or not I have a quorum, put aside this wage settlement or this legislation of salaries, I would have, as a leader of the Barbados Union of Teachers, to ask what it is I am doing that is so wrong which stops my membership from coming out to discuss an issue as fundamental as their pay? Mr. Speaker, that is a serious issue because if your membership does not feel that they have to attend on this issue, it is either that they have no confidence in their leadership or they feel that the leadership is irrelevant to their needs and concerns at this point in time.

Sir, I am not going to spend my half hour dealing with them because I have other things which, I believe, are more salutary to deal with, than whether or not the President of the Barbados Union of Teachers has a higher priority and a higher commitment to her political agenda, than to her union agenda. May I say, Mr. Speaker, that it is her right to disagree. It is also the right of the BUT to disagree, but it is also the right of Honourable Members on this Side to question whether her political commitment does not cloud her union perspective.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend some time talking about the record of this Government, in relation to public servants but in particular, in relation to persons in my ministry, police officers, fire officers, prison officers, postmen and, indeed, the general category of workers falling within the administrative section, but largely the protective services.

Sir, sometime last year, this Government in recognition of the undue burden placed on police officers, nurses and prison officers to work overtime, introduced a flexible responsibility allowance, recommending that an allowance would be paid to these persons but computed on the basis of the number of hours worked. Sir, very often, people working in these essential services, had to go outside of the construct of the normal eight-hour day and they were not appropriately compensated for so doing. We introduced a flexible responsibility allowance. In some areas there were some hiccups in relation to the administration of the disbursement of it but I think that it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that those administrative hiccups have been dealt with and that the matter is now being processed on a regular basis.

Sir, there is another issue that was outstanding for sometime and all of these are without prejudice to the job reclassification exercise in which we are now in Phase 2, and which we anticipate will finish by April or May of next year.

Mr. Speaker, there is one issue which has been outstanding for sometime. I feel very proud to be able to announce it today because it is an issue which reflects that this Government is truly concerned about the overall welfare of public servants.

Sir, for a long time, the members of the Barbados Police Force, to a lesser extent, and the Prison Officers Association, in particular, have been arguing that when their officers or members are killed in the line of duty, there is no appropriate provision for their estate and their families. Therefore, the Government should ensure that where they find the kinds of risks that may lead to their death in the course of duty, we acknowledge that and place some kind of insurance scheme or compensation scheme in place.

Mr. Speaker, I am indeed very happy to report today, that this Government has taken on board these suggestions, from the unions and from my Ministry and they have agreed, not just police officers and prison officers but any public servant killed in the line of duty, will now have their estate and their families paid the sum of five times their salary, at the time of their death.

Sir, it is true that police officers and prison officers carry a disproportionate risk in comparison to other public officers, in terms of risking their lives and therefore, they are the ones who, most likely, will be interested in the settlement of this package. It is important because it has been generally discussed for the last ten years or so, as to whether there is an appropriate package for policemen and prison officers killed in the line of duty.

Mr. Speaker, this package applies to all public officers. May I just repeat that the agreement is that we should give them, should that very unfortunate incident happen, a sum that is commensurate to what is paid in the private sector and private insurance schemes that is, five times their salary.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that we will never have to utilise this option because we do not want to see any public servant, police officer, or prison officer being killed in the line of duty, but were that unfortunate incident to happen, at least we are ensuring now that they will not have the unfortunate spectacle of their families not being able to receive compensation. As it relates to an accident during the course of duty, for any public servant, may I say that the Government already places \$50 million a year, in the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) and persons are therefore entitled to benefit under the NIS. Additionally, where the Government is at fault, payments will be made – once liability is accepted or an excreta payment is being made because of the circumstances of the accident – from the Crown Proceedings Act. Where any such payment is made from the Crown Proceedings Act, the amount paid by the NIS is taken into account to see what is the final payment.

Sir, we already covered persons injured in the line of duty, through the NIS, and where there is liability on the part of the Government, through the Crown Proceedings Act, or where the circumstances are such that even though

there is no liability, but the circumstances merit the consideration of an excreta award, also, through the Crown Proceedings Act.

I am happy that we are able to complete the process and ensure that this very wrong thing is being corrected today, where persons put their lives at stake in defending the interest of the public, by being a public servant. I want also to remind this Honourable Chamber because I have to leave, Sir, unfortunately, that we have also corrected the anomaly that existed so that special constables who previously were not entitled to draw the flexible responsibility allowance, will now be allowed to draw the flexible responsibility allowance, as well as drivers and members of what is known as the protective services – the persons who drive the judges and who have to provide security services for visiting Heads of State or the Prime Minister – that these persons will also be entitled to draw on the flexible responsibility allowance. 3.15 p.m.

We have also taken note of the extraordinary burden placed on police prosecutors. We are ensuring that police prosecutors will now receive the same lump allowance that the CID officers receive on a monthly basis. We recognize that they are being asked to carry a burden that is slightly higher than they would otherwise carry if they were doing other policing duties on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Government that has sought to improve the conditions. We are committed also, Mr. Speaker, to continuously improve the physical conditions. Indeed, Sir, over the course of this year just over two million dollars will be spent on police stations. I indicated previously that we are in the process of repairing substantially Crab Hill Police Station. We are in the process of doing some temporary adjustments at Nesfield, St. Lucy to ensure that we can move District E to Nesfield while the major work at District E will cost over five million dollars is done down there. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would love to see Nesfield remain permanent. I think that he and I both agree that St. Lucy does not have the population base to sustain two police stations within a very close space particularly when District A services over 80 000 people. We are also doing some very necessary repairs at District A, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the CID Section as well as the Criminal Records Office both of which are in a bad state of repair receive urgent repairs as a matter of priority during the course of this year.

We had already at the end of the last financial year, Mr. Speaker, two mobile police stations. We had two before, one stationed at St. Lawrence Gap which has worked exceptionally well for the winter season and one at Speightstown. We recognize that the flexibility to be able to move the police around into communities where they are needed is key and, therefore, this Government invested in the purchase of two more containerized mobile stations. We hope to deploy one of those in the District A area to be able

to relieve the excessive pressure that is placed on those officers servicing District A as well as the excessive pressure on the people living within the District A area. I know, Mr. Speaker, that is something that will sit well with you given the fact that you understand the pressures in that particular area of St. Michael.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is to be quietly commended but by the same token, in particular, the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados are also to be commended. The Prime Minister of Barbados received the distinct honour a couple of weeks ago when he became the first leader of a Caribbean Government to address the International Labour Organisation. Barbados was singled out, Sir, and I am sure the Minister who was present will speak to this because I think Barbadians need to know that Barbados was singled out for its progressive policies in relation to labour management and, indeed, our process of national development has been in step and consistent with the improvement of conditions and terms of workers throughout modern Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's speech was exceptionally well received and I hope that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation will find it possible to share it with the rest of us in Barbados. At that same meeting Senator Trotman would have attended and I may say that we in Barbados should feel very proud that Senator Trotman has been further acknowledged by what has become his most recent appointment as Chairman of the Workers Group of the International Labour Organisation for the entire labour organisation.

Now I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that there is anybody who can describe Senator Trotman other than a man who fights for what he believes in. But as a Barbadian, there must be a recognition that we will either climb together or we will sink together. There is no sense of my trying to go for a belly full today and remaining hungry for the rest of the week. There has to be some merit in the old people's saying, "A little with content is great gain." I believe, Sir, that it requires a person to be blind not to understand that almost every country in the western hemisphere has been undergoing some kind of economic challenge over the last year. It started before September 11th and it has been compounded by September 11th. While it is necessary for us to steady the ship such that the economic difficulties can be overcome, it does not absorb us from our long term duties of expanding and enhancing the productive capacity of Barbados not just to be neutralized in stabilizing the economy but to continue to build on whatever since Independence and indeed before Independence.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has been responsible for seeing that there have been substantial wage increases

since 1995 outstripping inflation but still ensuring that we are fiscally prudent and, in addition, to have actual cash in hand that the number of terms and conditions that we want to enhance to improve the working conditions of people.

The most fundamental thing is something that should never be forgotten and that is amending the Constitution of this country to ensure that we do not cut workers salaries again. But it did not stop there, Sir, and perhaps that improvement in the psychological climate of the Public Service is matched by the further commitment today that we as a Government will agree now to amend Section 104 of the Constitution. So that for the first time in the history of this country a pension right truly is a pension right in law. People always talk about pension rights. Well, the common law and our Constitution never viewed it as a right. But this Government is so confident in where its philosophy is rooted that we are determined to ensure that we deviate from the development of the common law and from what our Constitution originally said as to whether a pension constitutes the right of a person or not.

We feel, Mr. Speaker, that a pension being a form of deferred income is, in fact, a property right of an individual. We are not only prepared to speak about it, Mr. Speaker, but in the same way that we are prepared to protect the salaries of public servants from being cut, we are prepared to decree by amending the Constitution, specifically Section 104, that pensions shall be a right. This is not anything that persons should glean over lightly because only a Government that is committed to the interest of workers and confident about its rooted philosophy will be prepared to take this major step.

Sir, I am very happy. Yes, we would have liked to have done better. Yes, we would have liked to see revenue even higher. Yes, we would like to see more productivity because to say one thing you have to say the next. In the context of the times in which we are living, it is a commendable thing that we still place the consideration of workers at the centre of our development process and ensure that we can add another fifty million dollars, \$50.5 million to be exact, to Government's expenditure this year. This is to ensure that in spite of the difficulties that we are going through we recognize that people must be able to live and they must live in the context of what is taking place around them in terms of inflation. In so doing, Mr. Speaker, in my view, it signifies the fundamental difference between Barbados and a lot of other countries because it is the social capital of this country ultimately that is perhaps the greatest fillip for further economic development.

3.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is that investment in our people, particularly in a knowledge – and services-based world that will distinguish Barbados from other countries in respect of how we are able to continue to enhance and to build

productive capacity, improve the quality of life of our people and, indeed, do right by those whose legacy we defend in this Parliament today. I thank you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, on the 15th June, 2002, at 10.00 a.m., in a City known as Geneva, in a land years ago occupied by the Helvetii (old name for inhabitants of Switzerland) the distinguished and learned Prime Minister of Barbados, in a wide ranging address to the International Labour Organisation, in the presence of hundreds of citizens of this world, and in mine, made bold to say that any assessment of the progress made by Caribbean nations between 1937 to present, would definitely yield a tremendous contribution being made by the Labour Movement, both in terms of labour's commitment to improving the working conditions and terms and service of membership, particularly too of labourer's nexus or liason with political organisations working in the interest of people formerly belonging to colonies that had seen such scars such as slavery, *et cetera*.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's address at Geneva Convention was described as extraordinary. In one week when the Prime Minister of Malaysia had also addressed that august and distinguished audience, the Prime Minister of Barbados got a standing ovation, while his colleague from Malaysia was not accorded such an encomium.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members on this Side have, individually and collectively, indicated their commitment to free trade unions and, from time to time, have applauded the efforts of our trade unions. Honourable Members on this Side are appreciative of the efforts made by workers in this country to bring Barbados to what it has presently achieved. Where Honourable Members on this Side may have misgivings – and there may be some in this Parliament before 1994 – there are Members who are part of a DLP Administration before 1986 and 1996, this would be where individuals seek to exploit labour unions for personal gains and where individuals see labour unions as avenues, either to personal advantages, as highways to national acclaim to popularity, or as a route to pursue to an agenda that is not as entirely congruent with the principles of trade unionism.

Mr. Speaker, the old people of Barbados have a maxim that 'bad contrivement is as bad as witchcraft in the site of the Lord.' Where a trade union person uses her membership to emerge from atop a union to exploit such a union for her private purposes in the absence of achieving a consensus from a broad membership, one is left to wonder, especially when defended by the likes of the Honourable Member for St. John, whether it is not a question of bad contrivance between individual worker in the labour movement and particular frustrated politicians.

Mr. Speaker, there can be no doubt that we, on this Side, are committed both to ensuring that workers of Barbados achieve proper terms of service and proper salaries. We are also committed to pursuing a level of national affairs that are entirely in sync and in accord with a sense of responsibility. Sir, even if an argument can be put that our Foreign Reserves now stand at record levels and generally, the economic health of this country is sound, must not be used as a password for an excuse to engage in the type of squandermania or recklessness that seem to be issuing from the mouth of one Member of the Other Side.

Sir, before proceeding, let me say in clear terms to this Honourable House. This Government is committed to the reformation of the terms and services of public officers. We are concerned that the law, both principle and subsidiary that affect the public service, is not found in one place. There is an array of rules and regulations that touch and concern public officers but some of these rules and regulations are definitely archaic and do not have their genesis in reason. To that degree, this BLP Administration is committed to modernising the law and regulation that touch and concern public officers.

We would like, as soon as possible, to pass a modernised public service act. Work preparatory to such an act is way in progress. We would like to take public service reform beyond where we have taken it and to ensure that, at the end of the day, public officers' efforts to contribute to the development of this country are not despised and, indeed, public officers work in circumstances and conditions that encourage them to continue to contribute to Barbados' development and conditions that would enure for their satisfaction as they spend great lengths of time at work.

Permit me then, Mr. Speaker, by way of contrasting what the DLP had done, as was so eloquently described by my colleague, the Member for Christ Church East, to that of what the BLP Administration has done.

In 1989, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has said, the DLP embarked on a regrading exercise. It is not well known what is the true motive for such a regrading. Suffice to say that in a situation where public officers were demanding a modernisation of their terms and service, in 1989, those at the top of the public service were given substantial benefits out of that regrading, while those at the bottom were ignored. There were officers in the "S" scale who took home between \$26 000 and \$32 000 while that lowly maid, messenger or teacher with a degree did not benefit.

Sir, even as largess was being dispensed to an affluent group of public servants, the economy was so being mismanaged by fiscal imprudence that within four years, the

very hand that was reaching out offering gifts was the hand that was taking back the 8 per cent.

Sir, the ancient Romans used to say, "I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts..."

Mr. Speaker, the DLP Administration of 1989 gave a select number of public officers substantial sums and did not treat the others properly. In four years' time, public servants, including those who were not the beneficiaries of such largess, were being called on to make sacrifices and had their emoluments slashed by 8 per cent.
3.35 p.m.

While that was happening, as the Honourable Member for St. James South is wont to repeat, many persons were sent home out of the public sector, many were put on short time, many were unable to pay their hire purchase, many had their mortgages foreclosed and there was fear and terror experienced on all sides.

Things so reached a peak that the Administration that inflicted this punishment on public servants and the country was put out of power in 1994 and a new, enlightened and caring administration came to fill the breach. This Administration held office since 1994 among the improvements that it brought to public officers were increases in travel allowances taking into account the fact that many public officers are travelling officers.

Among the increase benefits that public servants got from this Administration are better washing and laundry allowances for police officers, firemen, prison officers and persons involved at the Ministry of Public Works who deal with heavy duty equipment had their allowances augmented.

Postmen in this country had motor cycle upkeep allowances increased by almost 100 per cent from \$138 monthly to \$250 monthly.

Doctors in the public service have received increased allowances.

The vehicular loan policy before the advent of this new Barbados Labour Party administration of 1994 was standing at \$20 000 and this Party has increased it from \$20 000 to \$35 000.

Sir, an episode closed in this country in relatively recent times. Honourable Members in here will tell you that before 1971 there were categories of public employees who were entitled at age 60 to get gratuity and pension but the Government of 1971, which was not the Barbados Labour Party Government, changed the terms of service of those persons who were eventually called 'casual workers' so that they were dis-entitled from receiving a Government pension

and had to toil and labour in the sun until age 65 where they still did not receive a Government pension but had to rely on National Insurance Scheme pension.

Does this Honourable House not recall that from December 1, 1998, 4 000 casual workers and public employees were appointed as public officers and given security of tenure? There was a time when certain categories of Government workers could not be appointed, had no security of tenure and could not go to a bank to borrow a loan. Sir, this disgraceful misfortune was inflicted for 27 years on public officers of a certain type until this caring Barbados Labour Party Administration from December 1, 1998, brought 4 000 casual workers, fully embraced them within the rights of the public service as true public officers, granted them security of tenure and restored their rights to a governmental pension and gratuity as well as National Insurance Scheme pension at age 65. Mr. Speaker, these are some of the things that this Barbados Labour Party Administration has done for our public officers.

My learned friend the Honourable Attorney General because of having commitment elsewhere was not able to develop a policy that will definitely engage this Honourable House some time in the foreseeable future. This policy springs out of Section 104 of the Constitution of Barbados. In this section is a constitutional provision passed in line with the British Common Law that more or less gave effect to the old case of *Taylor vs. The Mayor Aldermen and Citizens of the City of Bridgetown*, 1967.

The effect of Section 104, Subsection 1 is that public officers pension lies at the discretion of the Head of State. Sir, we are going to have to change the law to grant a person who qualifies for pension as a right and no longer will a pension be seen as discretionary.

Sir, the fact that there was this case called *Taylor vs. The Mayor Aldermen and Citizens of the City of Bridgetown* means that an aggrieved person denied his pension brought a test case before the local courts and local courts upheld the British Common Law position and even the independent Constitution of Barbados enacted now in constitutional form, Section 104, and public officers at age 59 usually meet over a drink in a bar or at lunch and wonder if it could be true in this modern era of humanity that a person who has toiled and worked all these years does not have an automatic right to a pension.

Sir, this is going to be put right. This is going to be put right. There is no question that there will have to be a constitutional amendment, there is no question that legislation to do with pensions will be looked at. There is no question that we are going to have in this great Government a look at pension legislation.

3.45 p.m.

Sir, they are those who are intimately familiar with the

rules governing public officers' pensions who can tell you that there are not three enactments but there is an abundance of fine rules and enactments that touch pensions. The time has come and this authority can give its undertaking today that the whole question of pensions would be looked at, not necessarily in the context of National Insurance Scheme (NIS) pension reform. This Government has been known for promoting savings in Barbados and encouraging people to plan their futures and pensions and to be tied up with our stated policy of ensuring that each Barbadian truly and astutely plans his life and pension. Sir, the Government is going to do what it has to do by facilitating them by modernising the regulations so that people will be able to access pensions, equity and social justice.

Mr. Speaker, I would refer to the regrading and an inherent injustice and the fact that it was a political ploy designed to the wishes of a few hard-core Democratic Labour Party supporters but not taking into account the circumstances of the working class members of the public service or the greater public good.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that the Members on this Side, beyond reservation, are aware of the eccentric behaviour of one or two misguided people who infiltrate the labour movement. Generally we are for trade unions and we recognised their contribution.

In any team there will be those who stand out. In any group there are those who would do hard work and not be comfortably remembered. In the context of industrial relation entry we will not easily forget Senator Leroy Trotman because he has been the Head of a responsible and mature union for a long time and he has fought in many a fight and struggle for social justice. Sir, when Senator Trotman can get on national television and in a pained way, more or less express agony over the fact that his colleagues in the National Union of Public Workers and the Barbados Union of Teachers found it impossible to accept the standard set on this particular measure before the House. He was certainly pained over this.

The records of this Honourable House must also contain what pronouncement I will now make. Sir, you have the Barbados Union of Teachers; in this copy of *The Hansard* Mr. Tom Adams is quoted as saying that the Barbados Union of Teachers never agreed to anything. In this copy of *Hansard*, Tom Adams said more than once in here, that you can never get the Barbados Union of Teachers to agree to anything. He said that the Barbados Union of Teachers is like a beast of Ephesus.

Mr. Speaker, the point is, you have the Barbados Union of Teachers, the National Union of Public Workers and eight other unions and could you imagine that eight

groups like the CTUSAB agreed to what we are doing here and two other unions, caught on the heels of a name of a political nuisance from CTUSAB who is about to engage in a political misadventure somewhere in St. Michael, did not agree. Two of those institutions did not agree but eight agreed.

The Honourable Member for St. John talked about democracy but there is something called majority rule and there is something called democracy. Eight groups enlightened and not insensate agreed while two insensate and almost socially reckless, not groups but individuals, sought to derail the process.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East correctly said that in 1974, when the Government of the day could not get an agreement from the labour movement. One of the distinctive exercises here today, as would have been mentioned and I hope not in passing in this Honourable House, is that the rate of inflation for the last seven or eight years has been such, that when all of the salary increases granted since 1985 are taken into account, the inflation has not asserted itself as superior to the rates of increases. In other words, we have not been disadvantaging persons by granting such minuscule increases would be insensitive to the increases in the cost of living.

The Honourable Member for St. John in a kind of derisory way kept referring to the foreign reserves, Standard and Poor's and Barbados' excellent credit rating. I would not say that because of Barbados' excellent rating that we should have used our credit rating to borrow to pay wages. In the world of production and in the world of fiscal prudence, it would not be such a wise thing to borrow to pay wages. Any business that develops the habit of borrowing to pay wages as opposed to paying wages out of earned income, is a business that is courting trouble.

Sir, the Honourable Member is also oblivious of what separates this Government from the leaders of two unions. The Honourable Member kept saying words to the effect that what we are giving the unions was not enough and that we were depriving the workers. What separated those in the trade union movement who disagreed with Government is .25 per cent.

I am advised that in the world of industrial relations, the typical responsible union does not quarrel over .25 per cent. I am further advised that the increase of 2001, the 3 per cent and the 2.75 per cent in the year 2002, would be so compounded not only to make mockery of the minuscule increase in inflation, but would be compounded in the workers' favour in such circumstances where as much as we know that public workers have been admirably making sacrifices, they will still be able to meet their obligations.

Mr. Speaker, for months now, and I visit many places during the week, I have been meeting many public officers who either blasted a union as tardy, being out of contact with reality or being unaware of where Barbados is today. I detected as I traverse the plains, hills and valleys of Barbados, that public servants were ready for the increase of this magnitude as far back as two months ago.
3.45 p.m.

The first lesson one learns in economics is that human wants are insatiable and even human corporeal wants, falling short of financial wants, are oft insatiable. Corporeal wants like eating food are often insatiable. The average person, given her or his own way, would want as much as possible. In a situation where Government is owed millions and millions of dollars and in a situation where in the last 25 years Government has been owed money and in a position where it is possible that some Minister of Finance between 1971, or better still, since 1966 and now, may have increased taxation while what was owed to Government was hardly taxed. All these things you have to look at.

Let me put the point properly, Mr. Speaker. Government is owed millions of dollars and sometime between 1966 and 1986 a government in its anxiety to get revenue, even when it was owed millions and even when what it was owed was higher than what it got from imposing new taxes would have been constrained in what it wanted to do.

I detect, notwithstanding what the Press has reported today, no massed and certainly no crass outcry by public officers that this is a despotic regime. They said so in 1974. I am not seeing the people of Barbados saying, simply because of what we are doing today and the Senate will do tomorrow, that we are being tyrannical or despotic. By contrast, the typical public servant, whether general messenger, whether maid, whether clerk, whether school teacher possessed of common sense and distancing himself from that political nuisance is indeed anxious that something that should have been done in 2001 is now to be granted.

Even though I would be the last to say that there could be any heightened satisfaction or any tremendous amount of clamour or hue and cry over this, I still would think as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said, that a little with content is great gain. Once again, I commend the public officers for the sacrifices which they have taken and I would like to caution them to be careful of people who infiltrate trade unions and there form strategic political alliances practising a maxim that bad contrivance as we tend to say is worst than witchcraft in the sight of the Almighty. I thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in this debate and I want to start by making an observation.

Some months ago, the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados made a statement for which the Governor of the Central Bank was attacked by one of the leading trade unions in Barbados. The statement, and I am not directly quoting, Sir, was to the effect that what is needed in this country is a moderation in wage increases and a reduction in taxes.

I want to say, Sir, that previous Governors of the Central Bank have always attacked trade unions for asking for salary increases but this Governor of the Central Bank was very much enlightened by asking for a moderation in salaries but the most significant point was a reduction in taxation. I found it rather strange that the trade union movement of Barbados would attack the Governor of the Central Bank for recognising a very important point and that is that the most important thing that matters to an employee is the increase in disposable income. That is why a couple weeks ago I came to this Parliament and spoke about a car that was turning up at the gas station and putting in gas and diesel at the same time.

I also want to remind this Parliament that in the year 2000, I spoke about the three-sided triangle: Government on one side, the private sector on another and the workers at the bottom of the triangle. I said at that time that when the Protocol was introduced that there were supposed to be three equal partners. I said that when one observes that the private sector got what they wanted and I was able to quote from a government document which proves that profits increased for the private sector and taxes increased for Government but the workers who are accustomed to getting 46.3 per cent of the current expenditure of Government had a decrease in that percentage.

What we are having today is the situation now where we cannot any longer speak about a triangle. We now have to speak about a triangle that was there that is now a straight line because the truth is Government got what they wanted, the private sector got what they wanted and the workers have now disappeared. Nobody cares about the workers.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. It is not true. The fact that we are reforming pensions and that we have done so much as I said in my speech means that this caring Government really cares about workers. The Honourable Member is clearly out of place and is misleading the House.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: When one looks at the income distribution in Barbados one would recognise that those three strategic partners have allowed the workers to disappear from that partnership and there is no voice now on behalf of the workers of Barbados. I challenge that no one can tell me who now represents the interest of the workers of Barbados because when you hear the workers' representatives, some of them sound like the Minister of

Finance. Some of them can put a better case and this is not the first time I am making this statement. If you look at Tuesday, February 22, 2000 at page 60 you would see that I made that same point. If you doubt it yourself and you wanted more information look at Tuesday, January 18, 2000 on page 24. These are all the debates of the House of Assembly.

I am saying that one of the most important things that must be taken into account is wages negotiations, not what the teachers are saying, not what the other civil servants are saying. The most important thing must be judged by a statement made by the Honourable Member for St. James North that as he travels through Barbados everybody wants their money. That is a fact. I agree with the Honourable Member. Can you imagine, Sir, policemen who have been crying out now for eight years for a better wages package are so starved of resources that they want their money too? 4.05 p.m.

Sir, the Government has kept them for over two years in negotiations, and they are so hungry, that even though they would have liked a higher increase, things have impacted so negatively on their pockets that they prefer to accept what is given to them because they recognise that there is a pact. They will also recognise, that an engagement has been entered into by some other bodies who do not represent their interest and it is better for them to take what they are entitled to now, before they lose it, Sir, can you imagine this?

Sir, some of the hardest working men and women in Barbados, who now have to work, fighting the crime situation in Barbados, especially as it relates to the drug trade, are so starved that they are now saying that it is better to take a penny instead of waiting for ten cents. Do you understand the point I am making? They are so hungry for their wage increases that they cannot depend on the Trade Union Movement in this country any longer to stretch them out because the truth is, when they push their hands in their pockets, the salaries that they are getting, are not impacting enough on their pockets and they need the two cents that are coming.

Sir, how can we allow something like this to happen to our police force. I am saying that something has to be done, and let me say that a lot of attention has been paid to this particular negotiation and a lot of people will be trapped but I would not be trapped. I understand why the Government and the trade union movement have played this negotiation for so long, because this is not the important negotiation. The important negotiation is the one that starts right after this one and that is when the goodies will come. In other words, the workers have been taken for a ride in this one because this is not the election year wages pact. The next negotiations will be in the election year wages pack and that

will be the negotiations where you will not find certain trade unions rushing to sign on the dotted line. They understand fully that they had to bring the two to come close to one another, so that they would go back to their Members and say, well we did not get it in this one, it is the other one.

Sir, what is important about this one is that this is not the one that will impact on the votes. It is the next one that starts about October and you know that elections cannot be called in Barbados before September, because most of the MPs in here came in 1994 and they have their pension rights to protect.

Sir, I am saying that the negotiations that you will see the civil servants understanding quite well, will be the ones after September and that is when they know they have clout.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The civil servants understand fully what has gone down and they have accepted that they will take this one but they are not going to take the other one sitting down likely. The civil servants have spoken to me and I understand quite well why they have accepted this small increase because they know that the 'goodie basket' will soon be coming and they will have their opportunity to demand their fair share of the pie.

Sir, I am also saying that we have to understand that this negotiation must also enlighten something. The car which I spoke about, we must stop putting two fuels in that car at the same time. We must understand that the fuel which goes into that car will be the fuel that will propel the economy, the people and the companies. As it stands now, Sir, the economy is stagnating because we are putting in the wrong fuel at the wrong time in the car. We need to sit down and understand the messages because when the right fuel is put in the car, the workers will be happy, the employers will be happy, the investors will be happy and the Government will be happy.

Sir, right now we have a system where everybody is unhappy and we need to understand that there is a better way and someone with vision to deliver that, and you know that the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow was a very great man. If you listen to him on mornings around eight o'clock or on the hour...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: He is like a prophet to me. Of course, I still hear him and I will always hear him because I understand the exact message he is sending.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, I do but it is a good message.

Sir, he says that wisdom is the most important thing and what is needed in this Country right now, is people with wisdom and not square pegs in round holes and people who are prepared to think to move this country forward. We have to understand that this country goes through a ten-year cycle and we are now in that ten-year cycle. We need new thinking to take us out of that ten-year cycle and put us on higher heights. The mountain climbers are about to come down, and somebody must decide to climb the mountain and deliver the people out of the problems that this country has been confronted.

Sir, as I said before, this country needs to see workers producing and believing that they want to produce because they know why they are producing. We want people to invest because when they invest, they know what they are investing for and we also want people to know that when they leave their countries to come to Barbados, that there is something that they will get. After a tax holiday, they will not have to pack up and leave the country. There is a vision and a way and I am saying that if that vision and way is realised, workers in Barbados would not only believe that the only way they can get disposable income is by coming to their employers and asking for a little break. There is a new way for workers to get disposable income, by not only working hard but by putting the right fuel in the car.

The problem in this country is that we are putting in two fuels at one time and the plugs are in trouble and the car cannot pull the hill. We need to give it the fuel that the car can get over the hill in a second, instead of taking a half hour, and you know when it gets over the hill in a second that it is expanding and growing at the same time.

Sir, what we need in Barbados is increased capacity. What we have right now is a lack of capacity and for a small country, the only way we can go forward, is by increasing the capacity of the workers, the investors and the Government. The problem in this country is that the politicians must understand that they must stop believing that they must take to give back. They must allow people to have the capacity to use on their own and stop believing that the only way a country can progress is by handouts. Sir, the type of enlightenment I am talking about, is allowing the people to expand on their own resources, without having to give to give back. I will expand more on this at a later date.

Sir, I also want to inform the trade union movement in this country that they have to understand that the pact they entered into, was about the leaders and the leaders. The new vision that I am speaking about is about the masses and the leaders, not a one man and one man, it will be the masses and

the leader. People have entered into a three-man pact since 1994, but what I am speaking about, is a relationship between 265 000 people, who believe and who will know that they have a stake in Barbados and a right in Barbados, Sir, not when you take the leaders and bring them to the table and you talk to the leaders and forget about the people behind them. No, that has not worked. It has worked for political consequences but what we are speaking about now, is the capacity to expand the economy so that workers could feel that they are earning what they need to earn.

Why is it, Sir, that there are countries which have adopted this new vision and they are doing well? Why do politicians feel that we must hold on to old ways? Because we feel that once we talk concessions, people will come to us? We need to move away from this theme of concessions and allow people to understand their true limits. What we are doing now is depriving people of the right to operate their own destiny and to expand. At the same time, we are putting the stranglehold on our people in the country and we are stopping foreign investments from coming into Barbados.

Sir, when somebody picks up a document on Barbados, the first thing they need to do now is to find out what the Minister of International Trade or the Minister of Finance is going to do for them. Under the new vision, they will not have to worry about the Minister of Finance or the Minister of International Trade because all the documentation they need will be available. They will not have to second guess, whether or not the Minister of Finance will approve anything because the policy will be very clear. The reason why this cannot happen right now, is because the car is going to the gas station and putting in gasoline and diesel at the same time. If the car was going to the gas station and only putting in gasoline, when the car turns up at the gas station, you will not have to second guess because you will know exactly what fuel is needed for that particular vehicle.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that this country has been limited by its politicians, and the only reason that politicians have limited the development of this country, is because some of them believe that the more control they have over the growth of the country, the better they will be able to strike deals for political ends. I am saying that political parties must understand that it is not about political parties anymore, because globalisation should have taught us that it is all about the country now and we need to have the economic policy in place, which could be read by the locals, the workers and the foreign investors. It must also be clear to them, that they all want to come on board and they will have smiling faces once more. What you are seeing throughout Barbados, is unhappy people and do you know why? Sir, it is because we are turning up at the gas station and putting in gasoline and diesel at the same time. What we need, Sir, is that right fuel...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let me hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It would take him three months to understand and then he will speak on it as if it was something new. He is the only gentleman I know, Sir, that repeats someone and he does not say, and I quote.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, you continue.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the workers of Barbados need the money and the only reason that some of them have asked the unions to accept this agreement, is because they have been starved of the money for two years and they need the money badly.

Sir, the truth is that the Government should not allow them to believe that the most important wages arrangement that will be coming into place in the next few months and that the soft wicket they have, where the ball is stopping and they can dictate how to hit it, that it will continue that way. The next wicket will be flying and the workers will be delivering those balls. The truth is that the Government has to decide whether or not they are going to see the new vision and be prepared to deal with that new vision.

Sir, I want to say that we have to understand that at the end of the day, it is all about disposable income and we have to find a system that impacts on the cost of doing business in Barbados which will not impact in a negative way. The truth is, what we have to worry about in Barbados, is our increased cost and our competitive way. Sir, that is why I have been saying to this Parliament that we have to find other ways of compensating workers, instead of having to come and talk about 3 per cent, 4 per cent, 5 per cent, 6 per cent and 10 per cent. In those ways, we have to find a way that at the end of the day, the disposable income of the worker has been increased and that is very important.

Sir, once that way is found, the total production cost of the country will remain either static or it will be reduced. You will find that because of the influence of that particular decision, the economy will expand and people will be encouraged to come to Barbados because of this new enlightened policy, where the cost of doing business instead of increasing, it will be reduced. Sir, that is what we want and why are we shying away from what we want. It is true that the Government could easily say that they do not understand the new vision. If they do not understand the new vision, they should allow somebody who understands the new vision to implement the new vision for them because they will be doing the country a good, by allowing

that new vision to be implemented. I can assure you, Sir, that there are capable minds in Barbados who fully understand the new vision that I speak of and who are quite prepared to implement that new vision.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am saying that the civil servants of Barbados have to recognise that between 1994 and 2002, they have given up the right to claim over \$181 million in salaries and we want to congratulate them for doing a fantastic job of foregoing those increases, and that no other group, in this country, has contributed more to the growth of the economy than the civil servants. When you look at the triangle of which I spoke earlier, you will recognise that in the three-way relationship, the Government and the private sector did well, but the workers did not do well. What was regrettable is that the party of which I am a member, in hostile times, we had to cut their salaries by 8 per cent, just to make sure that the economy of Barbados got back where it should be, and it did.

Sir, what was most disgraceful, when the economy got back on its good footing, even though the workers of Barbados invested their money in the economy of Barbados, they did not receive interest on that investment. They are the only people, Mr. Speaker, that I know, who have invested money in a bank account of which I will call the Government and did not receive one cent in interest for nearly six to eight years.

Sir, I am saying that the workers of Barbados have done well for the country but the question is, if the country has done well for the workers. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South reminded me that the Democratic Labour Party cut their money but that is a fact. The Democratic Labour Party cut their money but you did well eight years after the cut, but what have you done to compensate them even though you knew that we cut their salaries. You took that money and used it to increase and expand the economy and then you kicked them down the ladder, as if they had not counted and done anything to contribute to the growth. I am saying here as a member of the Democratic Labour Party that I am extremely proud of the civil servants of Barbados. They have done this country well and they deserve to be treated better. Sir, any worker who can give up eight per cent...

4.25 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is saying that we took away the eight per cent.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Honourable Member, the DLP took away the eight per cent. The Honourable Member,

while being a shadow Minister, could not convince his Cabinet colleagues that was a deposit for the growth of the economy of Barbados and that the BLP Administration should not only give back the eight per cent but also with interest, as the DLP Administration had seen it as an investment to the growth of the economy of this country.

Sir, if that money was given to anybody else, the workers would have taken that case to court and the judge would have said that anytime a deposit is made, interest should be given on that deposit. Sir, the Honourable Member sat in Cabinet and never defended the civil servants on this issue.

Sir, the civil servants have done well for this country and we should be proud of the fact. If, at this time, they have been forced into a position where they have been starved for a wage increase, we should understand the private sector workers want their money. Not that they do not want higher increases but because of the impact of the economic situation on their pockets, they had to give in to Government under these terrible situations.

Sir, for eight years I have heard of economic growth of the country but I cannot tell you about eight years of economic growth for the civil servants of Barbados.

The private sector has bragged about how much money they have made. The Government has bragged about how much money they have made and up to today, I have not heard one word out of the trade union movement as to how well, in eight years' time, they have been able to do for their workers. I am still waiting.

In previous Debates, I have called on the trade union movement in Barbados to tell me how well they have done for their workers between 1994 and 2002 and I will continue to make this point.

The private sector has bragged and as shown in this Document, we saw where the profits increased for the private sector but what is amazing is that, instead of the workers portion increasing that, up to 1994, the workers were getting 46.3 per cent of the Current Expenditure of Government and it has now dropped. Sir, that statistic alone has shown me that we have some of the best civil servants we could have anywhere in the Caribbean and it is now compensation time for people who have done so well. If this is not done it will cause us to reflect on past history. You know, Sir, I do not like looking backwards but forward. One cannot justify or criticise the position of the past masters who were not of the same cultural background. Now that we are of the same cultural background, we are doing worse and want to criticise others? We cannot do that. We must first judge ourselves and how we treat others so that we can make an impact.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, the civil servants of Barbados have done the country well. They have made sure that the Foreign Reserves have moved from over \$700 million up to \$1.5 billion, although I would think any of us who is versed in accountancy or economics would have carried out a case study on our economy to see how one can say the economy is declining, the Foreign Reserves are increasing at a time when foreign investments are also declining. It is a rather interesting statistic. I leave you with that puzzle, Sir. I know one day I will be able to work it out. I believe I know the answer but it is not for me to say presently. I thank you.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank all Honourable Members for their contributions to this Debate, although I must admit to being puzzled by the last contribution.

I suspect the Honourable Member himself might be puzzled by his contribution but as he said in closing, perhaps one day he would work it out and let us know when he has worked it out. Therefore, we will await his presentation.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House by misquoting what I said. I never said that.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have had a rather full presentation on this matter and I do not propose to be long in my winding up but just to clarify a few points.

First of all, I beg to make mention of the fact that in relation to Government pensioners, they will be receiving an increase of four per cent with effect from April 1, 2002. Also, in addition to the 5.75 per cent for Salaries and Wages as effective April, 2002, monetary allowances associated with various positions will be increased by 5.75 per cent over the two years from April 1, 2001 to April, 2002. Also, to reiterate the point that contrary to the assertions of the Leader of the Opposition, the statistics will show that, over the last several years, public officers have been receiving increases in wages such as have ensured that there have been rates in order to keep ahead of inflation and, therefore, they are at no disadvantage.

I want to reiterate the point that the decision at the level of increase which we are able to afford was made on the basis, first of all on the recognition of the deserving qualities of the public servants.

Sir, the extent to which we are able to do more has obviously been constrained by the environment in which we operate and the state of Government's finances. Sir, our ability notwithstanding our economic circumstances to

provide appropriately and properly for public officers will allow them to continue the important work with which they are charged in these times. As you will recall the context in which the public sector is required to work today, is one in which the Government is seeking to restructure and reposition the national economy to ensure its continued competitiveness and a meaningful place for it in the liberalised regional, hemispheric and global economies. Sir, while we are trying to enter into that new challenging world, there are still the old problems of poverty alleviation, improved education of health for all and other traditional problems with which to grapple.

It is, therefore, against that background that the Government recognises the need to ensure that public sector employment continues to be a worthwhile option, one that can be pursued not only for psychological, academic and other esoteric benefits but one pursued by way of earning for oneself and one's family. Therefore, every effort will be made by this Administration to treat the public service with respect and appreciation but also ensuring that salary increases are paid promptly and at levels which will continue to make us competitive. It is against that background of full presentation by Honourable Member on this Side that I want to beg to move that Resolution be now pass.
4.35 p.m.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

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

ORDER NO. 11

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (TEACHERS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 2002

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the above-named Order be now passed.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 12

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (PART-TIME OFFICER) ORDER, 2002

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the above-named Order be now passed.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 13

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE MINISTERS
AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES
(REMUNERATION AND ALLOWANCES)
ORDER, 2002

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that
the above-named Order be now passed.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 14

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SENATE AND
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY (REMUNERATION
AND ALLOWANCES OF MEMBERS)
ORDER, 2002

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that
the above-named Order be now passed.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 15

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE RATES OF SALARIES
AND ALLOWANCES APPLICABLE TO THE POST OF
PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRIME MINISTER,
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRIME MINISTER,
THE PRESS SECRETARY AND EXECUTIVE PER-
SONAL SECRETARY AS SET OUT IN THE
FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION
AND THE RATES OF SALARIES APPLI-
CABLE TO THE POST OF CLERICAL
ASSISTANT TO THE PRIME
MINISTER AS SET OUT
IN THE SECOND
SCHEDULE

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that
the above-named Order be now passed.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 16

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE RATES OF SALARY
AND ALLOWANCES APPLICABLE TO THE POST
OF PERSONAL ASSISTANTS TO MINISTERS
AS SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that
the above-named Order be now passed.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 17

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PAYMENT
OF AN INCREASE OF COST OF LIVING
ALLOWANCE TO GOVERNMENT
PENSIONERS

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that
the above-named Order be now passed.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 18

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH
SECTION 3(2) OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL
(CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) ACT, CAP. 6
THE AMENDMENT OF THE SCHEDULE
TO THAT ACT BY DELETING PARA-
GRAPH 1 THEREOF AND SUBSTI-
TUTING PARAGRAPH 1 AS CON-
TAINED IN THE SCHEDULE
TO THIS RESOLUTION

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that
the above-named Order be now passed.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 19

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE JUDGES
(REMUNERATION AND PENSIONS)
(CONDITIONS OF SERVICES AND
ALLOWANCES) (AMENDMENT)
REGULATIONS, 2002

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that
the above-named Order be now passed.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to
move that this House be adjourned until July 9, 2002, at
11.00 a.m.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to second that.

*The question that the House be adjourned until July 9,
2002 at 11:00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative
without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House
accordingly.
4.45 p.m.*

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MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)

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