

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1999 - 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 9, 2002.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11:20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed., (Speaker) His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J. P., (Deputy Speaker) Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.M. (Cantab.) 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.) Mr. G. W. PAYNE, LL.B. Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A.(Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of the Labour and Social Security) Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees) Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B., (Minister Education, Youth Affairs and Sports) Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed.,J.P. (Minister of Housing and Lands) Hon. Mr. 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 Environment) Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C, LL.B. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House) Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A., Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary, 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. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P. (Minister fo State Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Prayers were taken by Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY:

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, July 2, 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, July 2, 1999, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report to this Honourable House that I am in receipt from the Accountant General, the Accounts and Statements for the month of March, 2002.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, 2002, be read a first time.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

ORDER NO 3

RESUMPTION OF GREEN PAPER ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR POLICY

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this matter has been largely overtaken. Since this Green Paper was laid, debate was started then there was a Telecommunications Act which this Honourable House passed towards the end of 2001 and in the circumstances there can be no useful purpose served by continuing debate on this matter, since a Green Paper simply outlines Government's intended policy and it is the first stage before the second policy, which is the White Paper and then the Bill which then becomes the legislation. In the circumstances, Sir, there will be no further proceedings with this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: If this is the will of the House, then so be it.

ORDER NO. 6
RESUMPTION OF POLICY FRAMEWORK
FOR A NEW PUBLIC SERVICE ACT

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, in examining the instant Resolution before this Honourable House, which is a Resolution to take note of the Report of a Committee established to advise on a Policy Framework for a New Public Service Act. The comment must be made that the purpose of the report of the Committee that advises on the Policy Frame was basically twofold, (a) to modernise the law, rules and procedures of the public service and (b) to add greater equity to the public service generally. Also, to ensure that those who toil and labour in the public sector as workers do so in conditions of improved dignity which would impact on the efficiency and productivity, while at the same time permitting them to actualise themselves and to achieve a measure of physiological fulfillment out of their jobs beyond what wage or salary they would have got.

Sir, in looking at this matter, it is imperative to bear in mind that irrespective to the number of hundreds of persons who work in the public service, irrespective of the history of the public service and efforts made to date to improve the public service, the fact remains that the rules and regulations concerning public officers are many and varied and are scattered all over the place.

I must say that Government's stated policy and determination are to ultimately provide for a modernised Public Service Act which would improve conditions and at the same time bring more sense to the conditions of service that affect public servants. Permit me, Mr. Speaker, to mention some of the rules and regulations that are considered to bind various categories of public officers.

Sir, we have the Unestablished Disciplinary Rules, 1980; the Temporary Employees Disciplinary Rules, 1980; the Casual Disciplinary Rules, 1975; the Service Commission Public Service Regulations, 1978; the Police Act, the Police Disciplinary Regulations; various parts of the Constitution including Sections 63, 92 and 104; the Casual Employees Disciplinary Rules, 1975, the Security Guards Disciplinary Rules, 1979, the Unestablished Staff Disciplinary Rules, 1980, the Temporary Employees Disciplinary Rules, 1984. I have not even mentioned that vast array of Civil Establishment Rules made over the years, many of which have got lost in the system. I have seen Civil Establishment Rules that were never implemented despite their law, simply because of that veritable battery of regulations, they were lost and fell by the wayside.

In addition, the point must also be made, notwithstanding the fact that I have mentioned some Regulations here, that I have not even cited the General Orders. The General Orders is a body of rules which civil servants throughout the service always see as very important as pointers to their terms of service, code and to where authority lies.

Sir, this Government is about to ensure that, with the passage of time and having taken into account the concerns of many public officers, a legislative protocol which is going to have a binding character is needed now and if not now, certainly in the very near future, to ensure that this great country of ours keeps pace with the time, also to ensure that ultimately the officers get the very best and systems and

procedures are put in place that will inure to greater production, efficiency and ultimately that the public servants could experience the 'feel good' factor about their jobs and selves.

Sir, a person has a certain interaction with his or her job. It cannot be denied that any person who spends any length of time on a particular job establishes a relationship with the job. The job, despite not being human, has a way of reaching out to the employee and touching the employee's existence. I am saying that in circumstances here the trade union movement of this country has done its utmost over the years to ensure that worker's rights are protected, Government bears a tremendous responsibility to ensure that persons who work for Government are not disadvantaged and are encouraged to stay.

Sir, there used to be a time in the annals of industrial relations in Barbados where people used cliches to describe public officers and some people were very abusive of them. Some people made wide generalisations of public officer's performance. Mr. Speaker, let it be said that the public service of Barbados is the envy of the Caribbean.

11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

There are those persons who work in public service institutions in neighbouring territories and, indeed, there are those who work in public service institutions, not within territories of CARICOM but beyond in North America and in Europe, who manage to see what we have achieved in Barbados as something worth emulating.

I come now to the point, Mr. Speaker, that has gone down the way of cliches and generalisations. This first point has to do with bureaucracy. I will not look at Weber's description on bureaucracy on this occasion, but persons who bear ill will to the public service and even some who do not bear ill will always talk about the bureaucracy and by the end of the day after they have spoken about their perception of the bureaucracy, the listener gets the impression, not that these people who are speaking are ignorant people, but that the bureaucracy which has been lambasted is such a monster that no normal person would want to interact with it.

Mr. Speaker, if you consider the bureaucracies of the United States of America, if you consider the bureaucracies of some European countries, indeed, if you consider the bureaucracies in institutions that one can say should know better, like the IADB, like the European Bank, those institutions carry much more bureaucracy and attendant frustrations than the bureaucracy of Barbados.

Indeed, in recent times, there are those in Barbados who used to criticise our bureaucracy who are beginning to see within the last ten years and certainly within the last seven years a new attitude being shown in this country where the average public service officer is conscientious and works as well as any.

I remember as a youngster hearing people say that the private sector always was very efficient, that workers in the private sector demonstrated in the affective domain attitudes that were healthier than that

of persons in the public sector. Mr. Speaker, as a Barbadian who has been into private sector agencies and public sector agencies, even before I entered public life, I must say that I see within many ministries and departments in this country an attitude by workers where they want results as fast as any others. It is true that you do get the odd person who likes to proceed in what he or she perceives to be the proper procedural way, and those given to exotic procedures will not object to moving slowly.

In my view, in this country, there are junior and middle managers and many seniors in the public service who want to get results and who would define efficiency in terms of doing the work well, in terms of the character of the work and achieving a measure of soundness in the work, producing satisfactorily and doing it efficiently. So I am not going to subscribe to the view that the Barbados Civil Service or the Barbados Public Service is hit by such a slow moving bureaucracy that nothing happens quickly.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, successive administrations over the years have always seen that there is room for improvement. We have got accustomed to an approach used some years ago called organisation and management. To many a public officer, organisation and management, as conceptualised years ago, represented a definitive step and showed a particular determination by the authorities to ensure that systems within the public service were improved and that, at the same time, those who work could get fulfilment and satisfaction out of their work.

Mr. Speaker, it cannot be denied, even if I do not expatiate fully on organisation and management, that successive administrations in this country have also committed themselves to the importance of training and of human resource management and human resource development. All administrations that have served this noble country of ours in the last 35 to 40 years have recognised training. In fact, for a while there has been a special department set up to deal exclusively with training. I am not unaware of the cynics who wonder whether you should have a separate training department and a separate ministry of the civil service and a separate chief personnel department. There is a theory, Mr. Speaker, that the three can be safely amalgamated but, in defense of training, one must wonder if in amalgamation of the Ministry of the Civil Service and the Chief Personnel Officer's Department if training should be swept in with them at the risk that if a mini-bureaucracy is created there that training might be slowed down or might be hampered.

I would rather be inclined to the view that a separate department of training even if a case can be made out for amalgamation of what people called Service Commission and the Ministry of the Civil Service is needed, because in the context of the Government's stated commitment to education, training and instruction, it is clear that those responsible for encouraging public officers to continue to educate themselves to do more courses and such like should allow for a special department that would supervise training that would facilitate training and allow conditions under which trainees can go and train.

The point has to be made that in the context of organisation and management, in the context of modernisation, training will continue to occupy a very important stage, such an important stage that one is left to wonder if after the parent legislation and accompanying regulations, training does not stand as high in the taxonomy as these matters.

Mr. Speaker, the document that informs this debate has many sections, including a section on management of the public service generally and including a section on financial management. The

need to modernise management practices, the need to improve financial systems cannot be understated or cannot be overstated.

There is an aspect within conditions of service which, having considered the present circumstances facing public servants, having looked at the way forward, the whole question of safety and having made recommendations goes on to look at a number of concerns. In terms of accountability, ethics and other matters, one is advised strongly to go through the whole document until one finds a curious section on this whole question of sexual harassment.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard those who clearly do not know or who clearly should know better recently denounce Government for not moving rapidly with legislation on sexual harassment. I am not going to speak on this matter facetiously but all I will say is that there is draft sexual harassment legislation touching Barbados available, that one reason why the law has gone no further is that a group representing women's interests met with us some weeks ago and told us that they needed a lot of time to look carefully at this question of sexual harassment. I asked them how much time they wanted and they all said there was a representative body of persons from all sides of the political spectrum, excluding the former director of Women's Affairs who was recently heard to say that she lamented the fact that sexual harassment has not been put on the front burner. These women said at that meeting with us a few weeks ago that they had never been properly consulted on the policy governing sexual harassment and that they needed time. To date, they have not yet reported back.

Mr. Speaker, the question of sexual harassment is dealt with in this document at pages 51 and 52. The document says quite clearly that sexual harassment is a breach of this code.

11:40 a.m.

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Speaker, this Document, to its credit, is able to define sexual harassment in the following terms and tones:

1.15.2 Unwelcome and/or unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that constitute harassment when;

(a) Submitting to or rejecting such conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment;

(b) Submitting to or rejecting the conduct is a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual;
or

(c) The performance unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

It goes on to look at instances where some person who tries to solicit, request, pleads for, or demands sexual favours from a person perceived to be in a less strong bargaining position.

Mr. Speaker, this does not speak of sexual harassment exclusively as something practiced by, or afflicted by males or females. It speaks in such a general way as to clearly allow for instances where the male falls victim of this unwanted behaviour in the same way that the female species can fall victim. This approach, Mr. Speaker, is not inconsistent with a number of conventional organisations which speak to the issue of equity of decent work.

Mr. Speaker, I believe every Parliamentarian in this Honourable House would give his mind to supporting any cause where persons who work are allowed to do so in conditions of dignity and safety. Where they can function without interference, either by another person, or without running the risk of being trampled on, harmed or injured by machinery, et cetera.

Another factor to be considered would be that of age. Clearly, no one in his right mind in this country or anywhere, ought to allow children between the ages of 8 and 11 years old, to do any hard and oppressive physical work. Therefore, when speaking about the general concept of decent work, I bear in mind even though this country has no real history of child labour to which anyone can point, that is a matter that cannot be swept under the carpet.

Unfortunately, there are countries in this world where over 145 million children are forced to work in factories, canefields, mines, et cetera. We do not have that situation here. Yet this Document talks about decent work in a different context.

Mr. Speaker, decent work will be undermined where, in the context of a sexual situation, a person perceives himself to be in a superior bargaining position and literally seeks to exploit the relative weakness of another, either for direct gain or with the aim of victimising that person, if he does not achieve his wicked and evil ends for this purpose.

Mr. Speaker, there are other matters to which Honourable Members might need their memories refreshing. It has been a while since this matter was last looked at and which Honourable Members should consider.

Earlier I mentioned the issue of the General Orders. I should say, Mr. Speaker, the General Orders have an interesting history. The vast majority of public officers see the General Orders as having a legal source, efficacy and a legal force but I have heard a contrary opinion being expressed that in the context of the manner in which other civil servants law and regulations have been made, the General Orders were not made in that same fashion and, strictly speaking, might not be law. I do not enter a Debate on it. I am one who has never doubted whether orders that sought to bring discipline were legally efficacious.

Mr. Speaker, the Document which informs this Debate has a section beginning at page 53 and continuing, called Code of Discipline. This sets out to rationalise and modernise disciplinary procedures in the civil service and in public statutory institutions and related organisations.

Mr. Speaker, it speaks clearer to anything than we have ever had to date on the issues of indiscipline. Persons who are familiar with the General Orders can say that it was not only addressed in a general way but there were instances where the discipline in the General Orders spoke to codes of dress for

public officers.

Mr. Speaker, in the context of current thinking and without re-emphasising the fact that codes of dress matter, a list of matters pointing to indiscipline is clearly spelt out. Matters relating to absence from duty without just cause, criminal convictions - and I do not mean convictions of minor offences such as traffic in the lower court but actual criminal offences that would have a felonious nature - the consumption and distribution of any alcohol beverages while on duty, the use of/and distribution of illegal narcotics while on duty, mutilating, altering or destroying documents and records, mutilating, altering, destroying property.

Mr. Speaker, in some cases where public officers should be confidential, one wonders whether the act of photocopying certain records should not be included in this Act, in circumstances in which photocopying is unauthorised.

Mr. Speaker, there is no Opposition politician in the Commonwealth who could say with a straight face and a clear conscience that they have not been beneficiaries of photocopies leaving sensitive areas. Malingering is also spelt out.

Mr. Speaker, the Code of Discipline considers - and the members of the Press can get copies of these Codes - both minor and major infractions in the public service.

I believe in the context of so-called minor infractions as contrasted to major infractions, the question of discipline for public officers is being considered to be put on a sounder footing than ever before, so too are penalties clearly spelt out at pages 57 to 60 of this Document.

Sir, in cases of major infractions, there was a time when we knew about the power of suspension, compulsory retirement and dismissal resting with Government but now the penalties have been increased.

Mr. Speaker, looking generally at the Code of Discipline and the terms which are to be the subject of coming legislation, either parent legislation in the form of a new Public Service Act or regulatory and ancillary regulations, Government is on the right track in terms of modernising the rules governing public officers. I think too, the typical public officer should be advised as to his terms of service. Sir, even though we are looking at modernising the public service and though the Code of Discipline for the public worker is going to assume a greater character than before, there is nothing for officers to fear.

Mr. Speaker, the Paper is seen to be offering contractual terms and conditions for public officers.

11.50 pm

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

If in future public officers coming into the system and those already in the system can be fully informed as to the terms under which they labour without waiting on the courts of law to imply terms,

then industrial relations in Barbados, ably lead by the great trade unions we have and facilitated by the contribution of unselfish employers, could see it emerge as a country that produces the model industrial relations climate and this can be taken by other Caribbean countries as bringing an approach to the management of the public sector that would better things in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I have been silent on systems but the document takes into account the fact that we are in an electronic age because until recently Government departments did not take credit cards.

Indeed, three weeks ago on a call-in programme a caller said he went to a leading Government department and when he tried to tender a cheque the officer told him he could only take cash and it was only after intervention from an officer of superior rank that the cheque was taken. Sir, the cheque was assumed to be a good cheque but because of antiquated attitudes and systems the cheque was rejected.

Mr. Speaker, if a cheque was rejected by a public officer, clearly there would be public officers in Barbados who would wonder whether they can legally take credit cards. This matter of electronic trade has engaged this Government and in recent times it has taken a policy position that the Government would take credit cards because there are instruments of paper and plastic that can easily facilitate trade and commerce.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the whole question of reform of this society continues to engage the attention of this Christian Government and I want to say that I am delighted to lend my support to the concepts, policies, philosophies, expectations and ambitions of this Government as they attempt to make things better for public officers, to make systems for better conditions at work and to make management and law clear and modern in the interest of the last child of this honourable land.

I thank you.

Hon. H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what it is a harbinger or symbol of but in recent weeks the Honourable Member for St. James North and I found ourselves speaking after each other in this Chamber. Sir, I must confess that I rise to join this debate with some degree of trepidation given the extreme colour with which my colleague has spoken but I want to make some observations on the whole matter of public service reform and the legislation before Parliament today.

In my view, the Government has set about doing two things. On one hand, it systematically sought to deal with issues relative to the terms and conditions of civil servants because these were of immediate concerns coming out of the 1991 to 1994 period when civil servants lived with a high degree of fear relative to security of tenure, losses of jobs, deductions from salaries and it was important that a framework for terms and conditions be developed so Government systematically started on that programme.

On the other hand, Government now seeks to look at the processes of Government, the systems of Government, how the civil service functions and to ask itself to what extent reform is needed in order to ensure that persons working in the system and those who use the services of Government can have the kind of relationship that makes for mutual satisfaction, which ensures that the job is done efficiently, that the member of the public comes away from that institution that he interacted with a feeling that his concerns and issues were addressed and there can be resolution of his matter.

We must ensure that the civil service is more efficient in this high competitive market and in a culture where we are moving toward globalization and a liberalised marketplace. Sir, the functions that civil servants perform are going to be entirely different from those performed by the civil service twenty years ago. In fact, the advent of technology and rapid improvement in that technology will make service delivery far more different than it was before.

In 1994 when I became Minister of Health there was a lot of repetitive work in the system but with computers coming into the Ministry, we were able to prepare a precedent, press a button and things were reproduced rapidly.

Sir, the entire civil service is going to be affected by the change in technology in the same way. For instance, Town & Country Planning Department are in the process of computerising the entire planning process so that rather than write the Minister or express frustration on the call-in programmes, you can go on-line, see the stage of the matter, get information on the status as to when it is likely to be approved and make your own input as well through the system.

Sir, I want to spend some time on the first point I was making that Government has systematically worked towards the improvement of terms and conditions. One of the early acts of this administration was the amendment of the Constitution to prevent further salary cuts. This side was of the firm view that salary cuts were not a desirable way to go and the Constitution was amended to give greater protection to civil servants in that regard.

12:00 noon.

Tuesday, July 9, 2002

Continuation of Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, we have over the course of the last eight years repeatedly and systematically increased salaries, even at a time when there is some degree of stricture in the economy, we have made sure that civil servants have got an increase.

There has been an amendment to the Pension legislation improving pension rights which ensure that persons who work for statutory corporations and who may leave their jobs at the age of sixty but did not have access to their pensions until the age of sixty-five, can have immediate access on retirement. Sir, all of these are matters that were dealt with.

We have a number of increased allowances for police officers, temporary teachers and postmen. There was the conversion of the casual employees to public service, thereby giving them new status and a new set of rights relative to pension, gratuity and the security of tenure. There have been increased posts throughout the Civil Service, particularly in those critical services like prison officers, customs, immigration, police and the public health inspectorate, recognising that they are persons who, because of the nature of their jobs, will always have to work overtime or have to be more flexible than other civil servants. Sir, we have put in place flexible responsibility allowance. This flexible responsibility allowance will impact on prison and police officers.

Sir, hazzard allowances have been increased at the Sanitary Services Authority (SSA) for those

persons whose jobs bring them into direct contact with matter that can be hazardous to their health or which may put them at risk. I believe the range of hazard allowances are currently being discussed by the unions and there has been some move towards looking at hazard allowances for other grades and categories of civil servants.

Mr. Speaker, it is often said that working in the civil service is very stressful. In fact, any job is stressful. The reality is that a lot of our time is spent at work. You awake at 6.00 a.m. and from the time you are awake and you are an employed person, you are getting ready for work. Then you spend time on the way to work, you spend eight hours on the job, then in the evening you spend a long time going home and then getting yourself together for work the following day. A lot of our time is consumed with the job and the work place.

Therefore, cognizant of the difficulties facing civil servants in today's world and the system, the Government has put in place an Employees Assistance Programme which is carried out by Network Counseling Services which is very effective for those persons who have accessed the service. We have not seen the kinds of numbers accessing the service that we would have wished but those persons who accessed the service have indicated extreme satisfaction with the quality of the services and support that they have received. Sir, to make counseling available to an employee is a tremendous benefit to your employment.

We cannot forget the recent legislation relating to the new salary scale. Implicit in that process was compensation for public officers and this would also affect police, prison officers, fire service and the military more than anyone else. Compensation for the families of persons who are killed in the line of duty at a rate of five times the person's annual salary. I am extremely pleased about that particular initiative. On three occasions in this Honourable House, when I was on the back bench and since I came back to the Cabinet, I have repeatedly called on this Government to put such an initiative in place, because I felt that it was important in a situation where there is increased violence in the community and where there is a sense of fear that those persons who have to be on the frontline of defense of the public, must be given a secure environment and must be made to feel that if they are injured or killed in the course of their jobs, their families will not be made hand to mouth or to suffer.

Finally, even though this does necessarily encompass the entire range of benefits that have accrued to civil servants over the last eight years, all over the civil service and several institutions, Government has improved the physical plant and conditions in which people work. This allows them to have a greater sense of dignity and comfort in the physical environment in which they carry out their duties for eight or more hours a day.

Mr. Speaker, wherever you go across Barbados, you can see new police stations, post offices, fire stations and upgraded office buildings. Some of these office buildings have been gutted and refitted. There are still those buildings on which further improvement is needed or where, in some instances, the quality of repair has not met the satisfaction of the employees.

It is not clear to me why in a tropical country we insist on, rather than using a good quality ceramic tile, carpeting all government offices when we know it is not going to be vacuumed and cleaned properly; where we know that a lot of people suffer with asthma and bronchial diseases. Sir, when these carpets are not properly maintained and surfaced, you are going to have several members of staff

getting sick. I think that we have to rethink how we outfit government buildings and whether we outfit them today in a way that is most practical for the way in which they are used and the functions that are carried out in those particular buildings.

12.10 p.m.

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON:

I have spoken, Sir, to the things that we have done as an administration over the course of eight years which qualitatively improved the working conditions and the terms and conditions of civil servants but now we have to turn to the civil service system itself. Much has been put forward about what is needed in the system, what are the appropriate methods of reform, what we need to do or not do and how we can change to be more effective in terms of what our current plans are.

Certainly, at the board level, the whole issue of decentralisation of the civil service has been raised and I must tell you that I very much support a decentralised civil service. Part of the reason for my support of this is the time that it takes for the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Civil Service to make decisions and get back to nine Ministries. I saw repeatedly when I carried the Health portfolio where at the Ministry of Health we would recommend, for instance, that new posts be created for doctors or that terms and conditions be looked at in respect of a certain issue. We would make a strong recommendation and six months or eight months later the matter is still at the Ministry of the Civil Service or still at the Ministry of Finance and people who are in the system and being affected by what appears to be the Ministry of Health's inactivity are getting angry that their issues have not been dealt with when, in fact, the decision was taken at our level and then passed on to those who had the authority to make the decision. That is true at every level of the civil service. Because of the centralised system, decisions that should and could be taken at the local level in the client ministry are passed on to other ministries, specifically the Ministry of the Civil Service, the Ministry of Finance or other Ministries, Attorney General's, for instance, when legal advice is needed and those issues can be terribly delayed once they get outside of the client ministry.

I believe that we have to move to a system where individual ministries have greater autonomy not only in the institution of their individual programmes but in the way in which they deal with their personnel, the way they deal with their financial matters, in the way in which grievances and other issues relative to staff are resolved.

I do not want to see this happen in a vacuum. I am not just promoting less bureaucracy for the mere sake of promotion. I believe that we have, before we can decentralise, to establish greater transparency within the system. In my view, in a decentralised system this would be the role of the Ministry of the Civil Service together with Personnel Administration both of which would be greatly reduced in size and function. They would determine the criteria for recruitment so that recruitment in the civil service would be standardised and based on set criteria and not just recruitment but hiring, promotion and other related matters.

Right now, there is tremendous fear and concern that there is no objective standard used in the

recruitment of persons, no objective standard in the promotion of persons and that recruitment policies and initiatives are not uniform throughout the civil service. If there is to be faith in the system and if a decentralised system is to function effectively, there is tremendous need for us to develop protocols and criteria that will speak to the issue of transparency and will ensure that there are objective standards by which John Brown, John Doe, Mary Smith, Peter Jones, Liz Thompson, whoever the individual may be, can look at the criteria and determine whether or not justice has been done to them, whether they meet the criteria for employment or promotion so that people will not be left in doubt that the system is being manipulated to benefit others.

Usually, the allegation is that the politicians are manipulating the system, but you will find Sir, and my experience has been that there are senior civil servants who are more politician than I am and who have their own agenda in relation to who they are going to promote, who will be kept down, who will be made to move or not move and there is a whole civil service mafia out there. Whether you believe it or not, it is very much so. They can determine which programmes are stalled, which programmes are pushed and who gets promoted. Sometimes, when people are out there cursing the politicians we have not a clue about what has gone on. The whole thing has taken us by surprise.

I really want to see an objective system develop so that the politicians cannot manipulate it but so that the bigger politicians in the civil service cannot manipulate the system either. I feel very strongly about that, Sir.

If such criteria were established, then the whole issue of decentralisation would be more widely accepted. A permanent secretary would then be responsible for his budget in the decentralised system that I envisage. He or she would have responsibility for their budget, for setting performance goals and benchmarks for the achievement of the policy target and the programme target. They would be able to gauge whether or not these targets are being met.

Equally issues in relation to discipline, minor disciplinary matters should be dealt with in house. Where there are serious disciplinary matters, there should be, as I think has been recommended, an independent complaints tribunal made up of civil servants, union members and other independent persons and somebody from the Public Service Commission who will hear the grievance and who, again, because he will have standardised criteria can determine whether or not there has been a fundamental breach in the terms and conditions by which this person is employed and whether or not he or she could continue in their job if, in fact, he or she should be disciplined and in what way. There is this notion that civil servants are asbestos clad. Anybody who feels that he or she is asbestos clad and can exploit that situation and fail to perform because they know they are there virtually for life....

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It has also been discussed that senior officers should become - I am not speaking in terms of what this administration is planning but I am speaking in terms of the policy initiatives for reform of the civil service that have been tried throughout the world. In New Zealand, for example, all permanent secretaries, all senior civil servants are contract officers. I believe they have a three-year contract, they get generous terms, pension, gratuity and so on. A Minister who comes in can therefore choose his or her management team and if the permanent secretary fails to deliver, then his or her contract can be terminated and somebody else function. That goes for senior officers.

Frankly, Sir, I do not believe that any fear should be implicit in a situation like that. If you are performing, then you have no problem. Part of the difficulty we have is that there are a lot of non-performers in the system. I also want to speak to that. Because we have to get to the point where the civil service becomes a meritocracy, where people are promoted. I have seen some young civil servants who are good who when you read the quality of their written work, sharp incisive thinking, people who are willing to say, "Minister, I disagree with you and my reasons for disagreement are.." They can lay out a cogent, well reasoned rationale, based on policy, on logic and sensitivity to human issues.

12:20 p.m.

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of Hon. H. E. THOMPSON:

On the other hand, I have seen on file the writing of senior people and juniors, too, that seeks to pass the buck. A lot of "Minister, for your consideration

please" notes without rendering proper advice. You have persons who refuse to take a position on an issue and refuse to give guidance. That is not what a public officer is about. So the file is packed with a lot of Civil Service language such as "BU at June 25th and so on". There is no meaning to it and nobody is taking any action. So that those persons who have genuine talent can subject themselves to the objective promotion criteria and be given an opportunity at rapid promotion and at leadership.

Sir, far too often we have people who are just promoted through the system by reason of seniority who we move from one place to another and we know that these persons are performing no function at all.

There are a number of other things, Sir, that I want to speak to and I will try to do that very quickly. I think that we have to reform the culture of the Civil Service so that it becomes more business oriented. There are two complaints that we hear a lot about. One complaint is that persons who are waiting on Civil Service decisions to make a business decision or investment decision, it takes too many months and sometimes years of bureaucracy before they get back to them. Civil servants have to understand that they too are functioning in a business environment and that in the globalized world they are going to be called upon to make rapid decisions. When we are competing with the mega companies, we have to be able to make decisions as quickly as we can and get our people into the market place at a rapid rate. So that we cannot sit down on people's files and business decisions for a long time.

Similarly, Sir, we have to ask ourselves whether the notions of security of tenure within the Civil Service in a globalized market is becoming obsolete, what will be the new market place and under what conditions will civil servants work? For instance, it is time that several critical Government departments move to a 24 hour service system. Several departments such as the QEH work 8 to 4 like the labs, even though lab services are needed all through the night. You give those persons overtime when, in fact, you should have people working shifts. The same applies to the National Assistance Board, Welfare Offices, Polyclinics and the social services. People need services at night. Politicians get called out to fires at midnight. You cannot get the Welfare Department and you cannot get the

NAB. They are all shut down and there needs to be components of these departments even if not the whole department that function as a 24 hour service. When there is an emergency, the politician and the public can call on the department.

We also need to improve the way in which we treat people. Civil servants can sometimes be very curt with members of the public and with each other. That may be a reflection on us as a society on how we treat each other, but that is an issue which needs to be addressed. I believe strongly that every person who comes into the Civil Service, rather than waiting for time to pass to be trained, should be trained at the onset on what are the goals of your organization, what is the business culture, what is required of you to do your job, what are the rules, what are your terms and conditions. Every employee who comes into the Civil Service should be trained. The same thing is true of the Barbados Water Authority when I speak about a 24 hour service, if we are going to be a true service economy. Sir, what will the Public Service of the future be like in globalization? Is Government going to be a regulatory agency or an operational agency? Let me put it this way by giving an example.

Sir, for instance, will we have an SSA that continues to pick up garbage that is operational? Will the SSA become an agency that supervises the collection of garbage on waste management issues while those services are carried out by the public sector? Depending on the nature of the faith of Government in the future, then we will have to institute commensurate training programmes for people to get access to the Public Service.

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir. Finally, Sir, three matters and I want to move to them very quickly. One, Sir, would be the whole question of job performance and evaluation. We have a culture of victimization or it is in our heads, so people will tell you, "Not me, I am not putting anything down negative because I don't want anybody to burn down my house." You have people in the system who are non-performers and they never get a negative report because persons at the management level and even some at senior management level are not willing to make an evaluation and commit themselves to writing on people whom they know to be performing poorly, not turning up for work, come in at 10 o'clock everyday, some come in drunk, some leave to go and get drunk and do not come back. There are a number of them in the system but you cannot get negative reports on them. The matter of evaluation in the system is critical.

The second thing I wish to speak on in the time remaining to me very quickly is boarding. The issue of boarding in the Civil Service is one that we need to rethink. Often boarding is used to get irritant employees out of the system or persons who do not want to work use boarding to get out of the system. The reality is that you have a number of young people in the Civil Service being medically boarded and the question arises about their future. Do you mean that they cannot work at all? Do you mean that they can no longer perform a particular task which may be suited for somebody else?

We need to revisit the whole matter of medical leave. You hear of people in the Civil Service who have been on medical leave for two and three years and so on. This whole matter of how we deal with medical leave and boarding has to be addressed.

Finally, Sir, virement in the Public Service is critical and I will stop at this point. Right now if you

prepare your Estimates and you say that you buy two wooden chairs with a cane back and you go into town and the chairs are not available but a photocopier breaks down and you need to buy a photocopier urgently to get on with your work, you have to come back to Parliament to change the note on the Appropriation Act in order to make a simple change like that. The absence of virement in the Civil Service is critical in managing financial

resources in the system. There has got to be flexibility in the way we deal with management and financial accounting at the Public Service level.

Unless we allow for more flexible systems, then we are going to continue to have challenges in managing our issues.

There is much more, Sir, that I would have liked to have said on this matter. I wish to thank you for hearing me and I wish to indicate that, while I believe that we have many problems yet to be resolved, it is also my very firm view by comparing the Civil Service in other countries with whom I have interacted that Barbados still has one of the best Civil Services in the world. I would wish to pay tribute to all those who have served over the years and those who aspire to top level service that you perform a duty that is critical to national development and I wish to salute all of you.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that the whole structure of the civil service needs reforming. Sir, I cannot understand why in today's globalised world, a civil servant must remain within the system for 10 years when that servant is very much frustrated and feels that he or she can perform much better in another sector of the economy.

Sir, we can have someone who, in the beginning, thought that they wanted to work in the civil service. After entering the civil service, they become frustrated by the pace of promotion, by not being able to exploit their true capacity in terms of carrying out functions of which they are capable but because of the system they are limited in their progress.

Sir, one of the first things that must be allowed to happen is that a civil servant should be allowed to leave the service whenever that person feels to, knowing the years that have accumulated in the service will be counted towards their pension.

Sir, I have said that and I know other persons will disagree but it is a disservice to the civil service to have someone who is frustrated and could be employed elsewhere waiting to accumulate the 10 years in the service before becoming eligible for pension, for them to go onto doing something they could have been doing for a longer period of time.

Sir, when an opportunity cost of this is done, it shows it does not help the Government to keep back those workers. In the first place, Government would be wasting money in terms of the amount of money paid out. Secondly, those persons could have been operating at their maximum capacity in the field they should have been in for some time.

Sir, the present system for civil servants, as it stands, does not allow civil servants to operate at their true potential. That is, civil servants are now limited to a 8.30 am to 4.30 pm job. According to the rules of the General Orders, when they leave at 4.30 pm, by law they cannot work elsewhere. To me, that is utter foolishness. What that is doing is limiting someone to one-third of one's working capacity.

Sir, if we are to operate in a truly globalised world and can appreciate what is going on, we cannot any longer, tie civil servants down to an 8.30 am to 4.30 pm job, but we must allow them to have the capacity to use their experience to work elsewhere after leaving their normal jobs.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation or clarification but I am certain...

Mr. SPEAKER: Have you spoken in this Debate already?

Hon. A. P. WOOD: No, Sir, not as yet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then it cannot be on a point of elucidation.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is deliberately misleading the House but having said that, I am certain the Honourable Member is aware there is a mechanism within the Civil Service Act and is well enshrined in the General Orders, that any public servant wanting to engage in a second line of employment can do so by first applying through the Permanent's Secretary Office, to the Chief Personnel Officer, detailing reasons why that person would want to engage in this second line of employment.

Sir, I have known of numerous cases in which the Chief Personnel Officer, on the recommendation of the Permanent Secretary, would have allowed public officers to engage in a second line of employment once it does not conflict with the main duties in the civil service.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, one would have thought that the ruling would have been, that once the job does not conflict with the current job, then there is no need to write to apply for that right.

Sir, we need to liberalise the concept of employment within the civil service. Presently, the rules as they stand still behave like Massa; where politicians believe they could set guidelines to control, dictate and influence the progress of civil servants. The politicians feel they are the big chiefs and the civil servants are the ones looking for scratch grain.

Sir, in a globalised world in which we are now competing, we must understand those rules and regulations must be thrown out in the Careenage. Sir, the faster it is done, the better it is because the concept of someone wanting to expand their capacity, then having to apply for that right is very much outdated. If Barbados is to go forward then we must be able to allow persons to operate at a knee-jerk

operation. In other words, whenever they see the opportunity, seize it and exploit it.

Sir, as it now stands, does one think he or she is going to get additional employment through the system, through the red tape, when there are some people who are going to be jealous and selfish?

Sir, the reason why persons accuse the civil servants of not producing is not because civil servants do not want to but because of the system with which they have to work. I think politicians are very far-fetched when they believe such charges could be laid against the civil servants and these charges stay.

Sir, people who have progressive minds have now understood that it is not the civil servants but the system. Today we should not be discussing how to make changes within the civil service as it relates to employees but should be discussing how the system could be changed to allow civil servants to operate at their maximum.

Sir, this Document cannot go any further than here. When it is looked at, its whole objective is wrong. We tend to figure the problem rests with civil servants when, in fact, it is all within the system.

Sir, the only way a civil servant would know they have the capacity to remain in or out of the system is when they are allowed to taste both worlds. I am convinced that if given that freedom, no one would have to complain as to whether the Government is being overstaffed or not.

Sir, there are many civil servants with the capacity to generate more earnings for themselves outside of the system than if they remain within the system but because of the policies and regulations that are put in place, some of these civil servants cannot attempt to operate at what they know as a fact of life because they are scared of being victimised or penalised by jealous persons.

Sir, the framework and guidelines in which we are now operating must be liberalised. If this is not done, then we are not going to see an increase in performance in the civil service. It is not that the civil servants do not want to produce but on every occasion a civil servant has a good idea to put forward, it has a channel to follow, then by the time it returns that person is already frustrated and feels his or her opinion does not matter.

Sir, sometimes it gets to a stage when other persons believe certain opinions should not be coming from certain levels. Sir, do not let us believe this problem only exists in the civil service, this is a Barbadian problem. In Barbados, some persons believe it is only certain voices that should be heard and should make sense. In other words, we need a total attitudinal change in Barbados in order for us to go forward.

Sir, I would bet a lot of these studies on this framework would have been done by those persons who have studied outside of Barbados and has nothing to do with the actual goings-on in Barbados. We believe that everything given to us from the outside can be implemented in Barbados without any changes. Sir, that is foolishness. We must appreciate we have some home-grown solutions that must be given the opportunity to operate and to solve our problems.

12.40 pm

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Sir, our problems are home grown and we cannot continue to allow people to come here and dictate to us things we already know. It is amazing that 95 per cent of our contracts are awarded to people from outside the country who then employ our people to write the recommendation. They then take these recommendations out of the country, put a cover sheet on them, send them back into the country, charge millions of dollars and the people here who do the hard work get only a few hundred dollars. In Barbados we believe that once it comes from outside with a cover sheet that it is important but if it is done at home, somebody will take that document and hide it in a desk.

Sir, how can our civil service progress when we do not want to take recommendations from people who work in the system but will take them from people who live outside the country and who cannot even explain the document. We need radical changes in Barbados because the systems that worked for us in the 60s and 70s cannot work in the year 2002 because they are outdated and if we continue to work with them we are going to be left behind. I will continue to make the point that the problem facing Barbados is like a car going to the gas station and filling up with gasoline and diesel at the same time. Sir, we have to be clear about what we want to do and we cannot continue to mix fuels.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South will not be able to understand this because these new ideas baffle his mind.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, it will not baffle the masses. It will baffle Honourable Members on the other side but the masses understand well what I speak about.

Sir, the new civil service order must be in place to make sure that when civil servants turn up to work they feel they want to work for eight hours, when they leave the job they can go elsewhere, work for a few more hours and one day they will be able to make the decision to have their own businesses.

Sir, we want to see people moving from employees to be employers but the present system does not allow that to happen because whenever civil servants work outside somebody feels it is wrong. Sir, enlightened civil servants must not be frustrated and they must be given the opportunity to operate at their maximum.

Sir, civil servants must not be ignored when they work hard. Many civil servants work hard and people come into the system after them and are promoted because they know someone. We need to allow politicians to have something called 'political jobs' where a certain amount of jobs are allocated to each Ministry and when there is a change of Government the persons in these 'political jobs' will have to go.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: There are 'political jobs' in the United States of America and when the

President steps out, those persons step out as well and that should happen in Barbados as well.

Sir, politicians must understand the difference between 'political jobs' and being a civil servant. If a person has a contract to work with a particular Minister when the Minister goes, the man should go too. Sir, when you have a political position on a board and the Minister is moved, you are expected to be moved so when you have a 'political job' and there is a change of Government you would understand that you have to move too.

Sir, this is what is corrupting the system because jobs that should normally go to civil servants are given out as 'political jobs' and these people then behave like politicians.

There is room in Barbados for a new job creation process called 'political jobs' and if the Minister brings six people he should carry six people with him when he leaves. Sir, if the Minister feels he has to bring his own people that he can depend on, we should allow him to do that but they have to understand that as long as the Government is in power they will remain but that if the Government changes, there is then need for a change of guard.

Sir, the truth is that this is already being practised in Barbados but the problem is that the Minister brings people with him but when he leaves he does not take them with him and they are left to corrupt and kill the system. The Minister should also tell these persons that if they do not perform they will embarrass him because I hear of supervisors who do not want to report people because they fear the Minister. Sir, these employees must understand that if they are given a 'political job' it was at the discretion of the Minister and this is why I am calling for a special category called 'political appointee' so that everybody will know these people well.

Also, if the Minister leaves, his appointees will go with him, this will leave room for the new Minister and there will be no need for these appointees to bad talk the old Minister.

12:50 p.m.

Tuesday, July 9, 2002

Continuation of Mr .D. St. E. KELLMAN: We have to develop a new system, a system that allows our payroll to look after those at the bottom. I am saying that it is possible to increase the disposable income of those at the top without necessarily increasing their salaries. We have to understand that you cannot get it in the glass and in the cup too, because there are certain categories of workers who will not benefit from the new system. This is where the unions will have to negotiate on behalf of workers.

Sir, I am saying that there is time for a new vision for this country and I am serious about it. We have to find a vision that will allow the employees, local and foreign investors to feel happy. A system is needed in this country that allows everyone to be happy and willing to produce.

Mr. Speaker, the biggest problem facing Barbados is the lack of productivity. We have the system but yet we are not prepared to think about the system and work the system. Politicians believe that every time there is a concession, we must take it from the person and give it back to him. If we are going to liberalise our imports, then we have to liberalise a lot of other things that would benefit the

country. Politicians must understand that this is about Barbados and not about them.

Sir, we are now at the crossroads and we must find systems to liberalise the whole country and to increase the capacity of the country and that must be foremost in the mind of everyone. We want to have maximum productivity, we want local investors to believe that they have a climate that they can expand and we want foreign investors to believe that they can come to Barbados and invest and that they do not have to go into an embassy overseas to get information about investing in Barbados.

We must understand what we are speaking about. In the fullness of time, I will move the subject from being the car going to the gas station and putting in gas and I will fully explain to this country what is needed to correct the problem in this country. I am aware that there are many thoughts of how it can be done but the truth is, what is needed is a system that will benefit all.

We must also remember that in 1961, when the late Excellent Errol Barrow introduced Parks and Beaches, a lot of people thought that it was foolishness. Today, we now brag of the National Conservation Commission (NCC) as a department that helps the tourism industry and it is now the leading department as it relates to the environment.

In 1961, what was considered foolishness, is now one of the most progressive steps that ever occurred in this country. People thought that the workers of National Conservation Commission were just weeding grass. They never thought that they were looking after the environment of the country. Today, we brag about the National Conservation Commission and its contribution to the country. What is lacking is lack of foresight and those of us, who have been privileged to have foresight, must be given the opportunity to exploit it.

I thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.00 p.m. today.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

1.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend my support to the matter that is before his

Honourable House. I would like to make a brief contribution but it is difficult to follow in the wake of the kind of energy and enthusiasm that is normally exuded by the Honourable Members for St. James North and South. We have already heard two sterling submissions today.

I believe that one of the successes of management by this administration has been the prudent manner in which it has gone about bringing matters to this House in a timely manner. When I speak of issues being brought to this Honourable House in a timely manner, I do not speak with reference to swiftness with which these matters are brought but when you consider the importance of various pieces of legislation in an effort to effect reforms across the Barbadian landscape and governance of our people and this economy, they have been very important pieces of legislation. The process by which positions have been arrived at before being brought to this Honourable House for sanction has been one which I think would serve to commend this Government for the prudent management over such matters.

I applaud the Government for the process of consultation which is adopted in these matters and that is not a point to be understated or undervalued. The process of consultation has been by formal and structural or through informal exchanges across the Barbadian society before they are brought here for official approval by the Parliament of this country.

This administration has sought to effect important changes which impact upon the lives of our public officials. I think that the matter before us speaks more to addressing matters of structures. It must never be forgotten that the important cogs in that wheel are people. We can modify or modernise structures, we can improve systems, we can improve processes but at some point in time we have to come to the point where we recognise that the people are servants through this system and they are people who are served by the systems who are very important in the whole scheme of things.

Therefore, any reform on which we embark should be embarked upon with this view in mind that will seek to serve those who operate within the system in a better manner, as we seek to improve the environment and the framework within which they serve and that quality of service may be improved to the benefit of the community which the system seeks to serve.

Sir, we have dealt with matters of protection, benefits, participation for workers and the whole process of consultation and dialogue which speak to the need to address the system to bring it into synchronisation with the modern times in which we live today.

Some people are of the view that the state should retreat from prominent involvement in the economy of the land. The question is, what is the true and proper role of the state in 2002 and beyond in a developing country such as ours. Is the state predominantly a regulator or is it a facilitator? My view is that in a context such as that which obtains in Barbados, we cannot afford a luxury of a state which withdraws significantly from a place of prominence and leadership.

State organs and mechanisms must become functional in this day and age. If the purpose is to be validated, it must become more functional.

2.05 p.m.

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY:

We cannot continue to carry systems and instruments of government which were designed in an era long past which is part of the distant memory of Barbadians into this modern era. We seek mechanisms and state organs which are more functional and which provide a greater level of utility which would be requisite to today's socio-economic context. I believe, in fact, that this is the real measure of the effectiveness of state institutions or mechanisms. The real measure is the level of utility which they are able to afford to the consuming public of Barbados. I use the term 'consuming' in its wider context.

If these systems and mechanisms are to be validated and to achieve legitimacy with respect to their effectiveness then they must become more functional and the level of utility which they afford must be made more pronounced. I think that what is before us is indicative of the desire to bring our state institutions, the public service in its entirety, into a position of greater relevance and into a position where it can afford Barbadians, visitors and business people from abroad alike the level of utility that would serve the type of effectiveness we want to see in this modern era.

The dominant economic paradigm which now drives the world and under which we are forced to live makes a lot of demands on a small developing state and the organ of a small developing state, the Public Service of Barbados. We are driven by principles of marginalisation and in this day and age we cannot separate the influence of these principles from the character of the public service entity as a whole or public service entities that we need to see evolve.

Those demands are varied and are very impactful. There is a demand for higher levels of efficiency at all levels of service and productivity in this country. You cannot think about higher levels of efficiency without giving thought to issues of value for money. The question must always be asked therefore as to whether or not we achieve value for money when we think of the expenditure associated with the functioning of the Public Service of Barbados in the year 2002. So we talk of issues of cost and, of course, we talk of issues of wastage. Higher levels of efficiency in this global economic era is one of the big demands which we face, higher levels of productivity which are mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, and I agree with him on this point. At the end of the day, that is what it is all about, that we are able to be more productive and the public service of Barbados must embrace the view that the business of productivity is a business with which it must be always concerned and be more concerned in this day and age.

When we talk about productivity, we are not simply talking about private sector entities or private sector enterprise we are talking also with respect to service at the public service level. We, therefore, must be able to achieve not only high levels of activity but we must be able to achieve and recognise high levels of output and I see those as distinctly two different things. All activity is not necessarily output. When we talk about public service productivity, I believe we need to think in terms of public service output.

We speak of measured output as opposed to speaking of mere activity. We need to have, and this is a demand which is placed upon us, structures and systems which facilitate faster service. This is the day and age in which we live. Time has become a commodity to which even greater premium is now attached. Therefore, we need to be able to facilitate faster service. That has been traditionally the case.

The world is waiting for no one and the rest of the world is not waiting on Barbados and in an effort to come up to speed and to provide the kind of mechanism which is fully functional in this day and age we need to be able to offer faster service than that to which we traditionally have been accustomed.

Another demand is the ready access for information. Information now is the dynamic on which this world turns largely. Access to information, therefore, needs to be recognised as one of those assets which we can adopt unto ourselves in an effort to improve the service and product that we offer to those at home as well as to the wider world. Faster access to justice and this is a matter of tremendous importance. Not only justice in the strictest or a narrow sense but the whole of those processes which govern matters of adjudication in the wider sense. All of these things need to come into the realm of thought to which we ascribe some importance in terms of improving the service which we seek to offer Barbadians and the wider world.

We need to have a public service which would enhance our competitive edge. We cannot get away from that. That is the way of the world today, the matter of competition. We are limited in certain ways when we compare ourselves perhaps to other societal contexts. The absence of certain levels of technology. We are certainly not a highly industrialised economy here. These are the kinds of things that afford a greater competitive edge to others. That being as it may, and we not having the kind of technology base, the kind of industrial base, that would allow us to seek for a further competitive edge, we need to utilise everything which is available to us. We need to have a public service which based on its experience, based on its trusted history and performance, is able to come up to marks in terms of helping to enhance the competitive edge of the Barbadian economy as opposed to others in the region and even farther afield.

We need to have a public service which provides a more valid and responsive safety net for those who will be further marginalised as a result of the impact of globalisation. I have often heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East expressing the lament that in many instances those who should benefit from the services offered by state entities are not able to benefit in as swift a fashion as they should. I do not think that this is the lament only of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. I believe we can all identify with that as Members of this Parliament seeking to represent the needs and interests of our less well off people.

We are faced with situations and a system which does not respond as quickly or as positively as it might in accommodating those needs where they exist most, at the level of those most marginalised. That is not a criticism of the servants of the system. That is a criticism of the system itself and perhaps the very nature of the system which stifles any effort on the part of the servants to provide speedier access to service by those who are marginalised among us. We need a public service which recognises that the world is now its client, not the Barbadian only. It is not only visitors to our shores but the wider world is now the client of the Barbados Public Service. That is the kind of world in which we exist now. The public service serves the needs of Barbadians and those who are here but the public service must recognise that its client is now the wider world and that the service which is offered through the public service will have to interface with entities and other persons and institutions outside of our shores in larger measure in this globalised context.

2:15 p.m.

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY:

Mr. Speaker, we need an entity which would become relevant and remain relevant to this changing environment.

One cannot have a modern economy, one cannot talk about modern facilities such as we are developing, one cannot even think of modern institutions and have a public service which is archaic in character and in orientation and being governed by systems which belong to a former time. Therefore, the environment has changed. The demands of the population have changed and therefore, the instrument which serves to respond to these demands must undergo some change as well. This obviously must be taken into consideration when one considers the matter of bureaucracy. One cannot have a public service in the strictest terms without having some kind of bureaucracy, else it ceases to be a public service. The bureaucracy as it exists now, must become more appealing and relevant to the times. If the institution is to change, as any institution must adapt to its environment, then the whole character of the bureaucracy must change and a greater level of flexibility must be introduced in an effort to ensure the service continues to be of the quality of which Barbadians can be justly proud.

Sir, points of control must be expanded. This is another way of advocating the matter of decentralisation. I support the view of the Honourable Member for St. James South, that there must be a greater level of decentralisation without, of course, returning to a situation of the type of local governance which identifies with the past situation.

Sir, control must exist, must be expanded and power decentralised in a greater fashion. Knowledge must become much less so the preserve of a few. There are those who through traditional experiences or by difficult position, have been able to acquire knowledge. This knowledge must not be hoarded. It must be understood that others coming into the public service must be made beneficiaries of the knowledge that has served others, the service and also the system well. We cannot have a situation where there are a few persons located in some corners of Government whose purview it is to be masters of all knowledge and sharers of none. Professionalism should not only be identified in terms of qualifications or discipline but must be understood to relate to attitude as well.

Too many of us too often hold the narrow view that professionalism is about the area of discipline to be pursued. Professionalism is about the qualifications which we have obtained. It is about the areas in which we have exercised our skills. It is also about the attitude we hold. If we are part of the public service, then the principal attitude we talk about is to service, to servants, and our attitudes to the people we serve. The public service must be brought to a place through processes of modernisation and change; whereby it is better able to honour Government's obligation and commitment to its citizens; whereby it is better able to convey State's benefits to those who would qualify for those benefits, either by right or by lack of their means and clearly sometimes we speak to two classes of persons. Therefore, the service and attitude of those who are principals in the service must be to ensure there is conveyance of benefits to those who qualify, whether it is by right or by lack of means. Public service must see itself as having a role in accommodating the business of the private sector.

Sir, so often in the halls of this Hallowed Chamber, so often on public platforms and in other public fora, the call is often made for the private sector to rise to the occasion and to lead in the development of our national economy, also, to be the principle driver in the development of certain areas of productivity in this country. We must understand if the private sector is to be able to do that, then there is a role for the public service in terms of accommodating the private sector, which speaks to the manner of attitude.

Sir, whether we seek to develop additional levels of foreign exchange, to expand the area of employment opportunities, the private sector seems to lead. Definitely the public sector has a role in term of accommodating the legitimate ambitions of the private sector once they are found to be in sync with the national objectives for the development of this country.

We need a public service which would recognise it has a role in facilitating the international investor, not simply to put obstacles in the way, nor to look so rigidly at the law as not to understand that though we abide by the law, we must do what we can in order to accommodate those who seek to invest in this country. Again, we speak to the issue of foreign exchange and employment generation. The public service should see itself as having a responsibility to facilitate the mandate, the programme and the agenda of the Government.

Sir, in this Debate there are those Members who have already identified problems where some public servants, being inspired by a political motive or interest, have the attitude that their role is to frustrate the programme of Government to so stifle the initiatives of Government so that other persons do not benefit.

I want to suggest that if the public service is going to be the type of service we want it to be in terms of its functional ability, relevance, ability to be responsive to the changing demands of the environment in which we now find ourselves, then we have to call for a change or to recognise a need for a change in attitude. We, therefore, need to become more professional as public servants and to recognise that professionalism does not only relate to one's training, job profile, area of discipline or qualifications but to the service which one gives, to the system in which one functions and to the public who depend on that service.

Sir, the management of discipline has been cited as the biggest challenge facing the public service today. I was surprised to read that this is perceived to be the biggest challenge facing the public service. I am not too sure, from my distant appreciation of the system, that I agree with that but it is so cited and, therefore, presents the biggest challenge. Whether that be so or not, in terms of managing the discipline in the public service, there are some simple principles which should govern that. These principles are: one must be firm, fair, and discipline must come fast.

Sir, sometimes there have been a number of questions with reference to the swiftness with which discipline has been managed and at which disciplinary outcomes have been arrived but irrespective of whether or not one agrees this is the biggest problem and poses the biggest challenge to reform in the public service, one has to accept this premise that if we are going to properly manage discipline in any context, one has to be firm, fair and fast in doing so.

In this Document, there is a call for the establishment to have a separate unit to manage discipline. Perhaps this is another structure of bureaucracy we are seeking to create. Again, I do not know if there is necessarily the need for a separate unit as distinct from what now exists to manage the issue of discipline. Whether or not that is the case, again there are some precepts and principles which must govern us in the management of problems on matters of discipline in any entity and, Sir, the public service is not exempted from this.

The question of accountability is a premium and the Honourable Member for St. James South spoke to that. A system can undergo change. There will always be deficiencies in the system but certainly the integrity of the system must be maintained.

Sir, Barbados has had a public service over the years that we all, as Barbadians, can be justly proud. I think still in the Caribbean Barbados leads in this regard and is much respected by the rest of the Caribbean and States further afield.

Public officials should not be held up to ridicule in public. In the manner of discipline, we have to be careful that we do not, unjustly or hastily so, hold up officials in the service to public ridicule. We cannot say that has not sometimes been the case and that people's lives and family situations have been negatively affected because of this. Sir, confidentiality is important. Justice must be swift. Justice delayed is often justice denied. It works hardships in the lives of people and, therefore, there must be a system that is able to justly respond to cases of matters of discipline. Also, the principles of natural justice must be employed.

Training was given some prominence also. One cannot develop a system where we cannot develop the structures and not the people.

2:25 pm

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of REV. J. J. S. ATHERLEY:

Any organisation if it is going to survive needs a proper human resource development plan no matter how small or big and in Barbadian terms the public sector is a big entity, therefore, the business of human resource development is very important. We continue to have a situation in our public sector which does not properly provide for human resource development, career development or career planning.

I heard recently the lament of postal people who have worked for two decades and cannot get pass the level of postmen because there is no promotion policy and I see the same thing happening in the police force. The public sector needs a profile that would allow for proper human resource development. We also have problems at the Fire Service and the Prisons and these are all matters of lack of human resource planning.

Mr. Speaker, my time is up but I simply wanted to raise a voice in this debate which is before the House.

I thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank all Honourable Members who have spoken on this Resolution. As you know the debate did not start today but on a previous occasion and eight or nine people spoke on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that this Government feels very strongly about the need for public sector reform. We feel that if we are to be effective in transforming this country socially and economically, then a clear examination of the procedures and processes governing the public sector has to take place in order to allow us to be as effective and efficient as possible.

We also recognise that this is a complex area as there are 27 000 or more public servants in Barbados and, therefore, this is not something which any Government can move into lightly because it not only affects the environment but also the fundamental potential for terms and conditions of workers within the public sector and also those who will come in the future. In the circumstances we have been deliberate in our process for the broadest consultation and opportunities for persons inside and outside of the service to make their representation.

This Committee led to the Report which is the subject of this Resolution and took more than a year to complete its business. There were public hearings, they were given an opportunity to meet with all of the stakeholders to take written and oral evidence and we feel that while the process has been long it has also been a comprehensive one.

This report now has to be formally dealt with by the Cabinet of Barbados which will essentially lead to drafting instructions being given once Cabinet settles the policy of public sector reform so that a New Public Service Bill can be introduced in Parliament in the future that will seek to rationalise the very complex, legislative provisions which now exist in governing the operations of the public sector.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we also recognise that the world we live in today is a different world. Therefore, there are things which have been established decades ago which may have no relevance now and also things for which there is now a demand out of the public sector which it is not structured to be able to give. There are also other issues which have been reflected in the debate like matters relating to promotional activities, transparency, discipline, political relationships and we have taken note of all these things. Generally, there has been a rich debate from which those who have the responsibility for further refining the policy before the drafting instructions can be given will have as a reservoir from which to pull and refine the policy for the benefit of the Cabinet of Barbados.

I want to thank all Honourable Members who have spoken in the debate and to say that this Government remains committed to the process of public sector reform. Some would want to suggest that it is taking too long but I rather the accusation that we have taken long, that we have been comprehensive and assiduous in our consultation than that we have rushed through a series of measures that fundamentally affect the largest group of people employed by any single entity in this country.

Sir, I defend that position on this basis but welcome that this is another step closer to our being able to realise the ultimate goal of a new framework for the public servants of Barbados.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDER NO. 10

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT HIGHWAY 'W' IN THE PARISH OF SAINT GEORGE FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, this

Resolution seeks the approval of Parliament to compulsorily acquire a number of parcels of land from a number of small property owners, from the Diocesan Trustee as well as from Constant Estates.

This highway, to be known as Highway 'W' stretches from the corner of Dash Valley to the St. George's Primary School and the roads have already been widened to provide this highway which goes from St. George's Primary School to St. Philip.

Sir, Cabinet took the decision three years ago to acquire 34 251.6 square metres of land for the provision of this highway. It necessitates the setting back of some of the houses, removal of a number of houses, people have been temporarily accommodated elsewhere and some were resited at Constant.

Some time ago we acquired a small parcel of land to the east of St. George's Primary School and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, at that time, enquired why we had acquired this land but this was acquired for the relocation of a number of these persons. Sir, more than 25 persons will have to be relocated from the area at St. George's Primary school where a massive bridge is now being constructed to facilitate this highway.

2:35 p.m.

Tuesday, July 9, 2002

Continuation of Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, this is important because the traffic coming from St. George, St. John and St. Philip is increasing. During the peak hours the roads become very busy and persons traveling to the northern parishes usually travel through Charles Rowe Bridge, into the Belle Road and connect with the ABC Highway to avoid the traffic at the Norman Niles roundabout.

Therefore, the Government believes that this highway is necessary.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that the people from the north do not know laws of the highway when he said that they travel from the Belle Road make a right turn onto the highway in order to get to the north of the island. I would ask the Honourable Member to withdraw those remarks because he is making a very serious charge about the road habits of the people of the north.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. He did refer to the people from the north.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would say that they are people who live in St. Philip and work in the north of the island who must travel through St. George. I am not sure if they make a right or left turn.

Asides

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I am sure that they do travel across this road now and it is necessary for them to have this facility.

A few months ago the road was very narrow. The Dash Valley road has been widened and a new roundabout has been constructed on the Bulkeley Road. I believe that as long as construction is on schedule we should see in the near future a massive highway linking with the ABC Highway.

Mr. Speaker, I beg that this Resolution, Highway W, where 108 parcels totaling 34 251.6 square metres are being acquired do now pass.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this Resolution. I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. George North for admitting that there is an increase in traffic on the roads and one can only conclude that he is saying that a large number of people are using cars because they cannot rely on the bus system. Sir, we have seen a situation in the north of the island where the people cannot rely on the bus system and the money that they would normally use to buy house and land, they are now using it to buy cars.

Asides

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the Honourable Member would stick to the Resolution.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I will but I am only replying to what the Honourable Member for St. George North said in this debate.

Sir, I recognise that 108 parcels of land have been taken away from the masses in Barbados. As you know, when you have a small portion of land and a small part of it is taken away, it reduces the use of the land. I hope that the Minister at the end of the day will make sure that the remaining piece of land is suitable for housing for those people.

I hope that they are in a better position because National Housing Corporation (NHC) likes putting poor people in a worse position. I also hope that the Minister understands that if there is one plantation in St. George that has arable land it is Constant Plantation. The smallest portion of land that you remove from that plantation can cause a rippling effect that would see Constant Plantation being taken out of agriculture and made into housing lots.

Sir, from the Minister's description of the location of the land that is being used, it is at the western side of Constant Plantation and not to the eastern side. This means that all lands to the west of Constant Plantation will now be threatened by cane fires. The argument will then be used by the owner of the plantation to get more land subdivided to protect the present housing that will be at Constant.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the Minister understands the point that I am making.

Asides

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, it cannot be by accident that the National Housing Corporation would have gone to the west of Constant Plantation, the most fertile land in Barbados to cut off a piece of the land, when one would have thought that if they really wanted to protect the agricultural land of Barbados they would have gone to the east of the plantation.

Sir, everybody knows that those houses on the western

side of the plantation would be threatened by cane fires. The National Housing Corporation has a way of coming to this Parliament and compulsorily acquiring land in a very smart way so that they can get future lands for housing development. The Honourable Minister is very clever by allowing National Housing Corporation to do this kind of thing.

Sir, I want to make the point that when the houses are constructed they will be 'down wind' of any future fires in that valley. It has not been by error but a deliberate attempt by National Housing Corporation to remove proper agriculture land from out of production to build houses so that they can expand their housing stock. I said in this Honourable House before, that the biggest speculator of land in Barbados is the now the National Housing Corporation.

Instead of using the land to reduce the

price of land in Barbados, they are now the chief culprits who are causing the price of land to increase in Barbados. Sir, that is all I have to say on this particular matter.

I thank you.

2.45 p.m.

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution brought to this House today.

The work at Constant in St. George is part of the programme that Government got into with the World Bank. This project is just one of the many packages of roads that Government rehabilitated under this programme. It is part of what is known as the Package B Project and it included such places as Roebuck Street. The part of the road completed was between Magazine Lane and Country Road. At that time, the project involved removing the road surface and the replacement of hot mix on this road. It cost \$335 000.

Sir, Fairfield Road was completed and that is in the Tweedside Road area where Carrington Village was completed at a cost of \$81 315. Also Spring Garden Highway was completed at a cost of \$1.1 million. Hoytes Village, between Holders Hill to Redmans Village was completed at a cost, including drainage and footpath, the widening of the road, structures and the roundabout, of \$2.637 million.

Highway 1 - the Duncan O'Neale Road, Benn Hill, Mile and a Quarter, Speightstown, was also completed and the structures, the footpaths and drainage were at a cost of \$3.850 million.

Highway 4 - Welches, My Lord's Hill to Salters was completed at a cost of \$5.250 million. Work on Highway C - Holetown, Orange Hill is still in progress. We expect to expend over \$7 million. Highway N - Rock Hall to the Crane, work is still progressing at a cost of \$4 million.

What we are talking about now, Sir, is the Constant Highway W which this Resolution is all about. The work there is to be at a cost of \$8.850 million. This work is continuing and it is about 15 weeks behind for the simple fact that we were waiting to have some relocation of houses. The utility companies are not to blame for this because they are waiting on the Ministry to have the work completed before they can come in and relocate their cables.

The entire road will be reconstructed and paved with hot mix. A new bridge is also being constructed between the St. George Primary School at a cost of \$1 million. Also in the area is a roundabout at Highway 4, what we call the Constant Junction Roundabout. We have many concrete curbs that we are working on in the area, the accommodation, works and other drainage structures, the relocation of houses and land acquisitions as this Resolution speaks to. There are 108 parcels of land and many of the persons who will be affected will be relocated to places like Salters, St. Judes, parts of Constant. We have built a house at Leadvale. As I said, there are many relocations and it is going to be a long process but at the end of the day these people who are being displaced will be taken care of.

Work is continuing between the bridge right now and the St. George Primary School. They have to build three additional sub wells and light poles have to go in. The work in the area will enhance the entire area. The alignment of Monroe Road where it joins Dash Valley will be updated. There is work to be done by the Barbados Light and Power Company and the Barbados Water Authority needs to put new piping in the area and some adjustments have been made by the National Petroleum Corporation.

The construction of concrete culverts and box drains would be part of the work being done in the area. We also have to construct guard walls for persons, side walks and curbs and pave the entire section of the road. As I said, the road is about 15 weeks behind but we are quite sure that we will get there. It is part of the Government's massive programme.

We continue to upgrade the roads in Barbados. The Ministry itself right now has just begun to receive a number of pieces of equipment, some \$10 million worth, which was ordered by this Government to continue the good work that it has been doing in this country. Eighty-three pieces of equipment were ordered and so far we have seen that the equipment has begun to arrive in Barbados and right now we are gradually getting it into the Ministry. The agents, Simpson Motors, Williams Industry and McEneaney Limited are all the persons involved in bringing in this equipment.

Only yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I visited the garage and I was able to see that there are pieces of equipment here in the country. So far we have 5 bobcats, 5 compressors, 6 rollers, 3 dumpers, aerial lift platform, bar-bending machine and a Mercedes van. In the Port, we also have 3 paint trucks, a JCB backhoe, a chassis for a bucket truck and 4 pick-ups. It is expected by the end of this month or early next month 17 small dump trucks and 3 ten-wheeler dump trucks. By the end of September, we are expecting the fuel truck, the water trucks, a garbage compactor and the sewage truck.

Sir, I have said all this to say that we know that we are behind a lot of the woodwork because of a lack of equipment. The Ministry had to go out there and rent equipment in order to carry out the Government's work. Many persons will see when the crews weed the road that sometimes a lot of the weeds are left in the road. The reason for that, Sir, is a lack of trucks. As soon as we are in a position to have all the equipment in Barbados we will be doing the work, going out there paving and rehabilitating roads, putting curbs in place, all the Sealy Land, Bank Hall work which we were concentrating on. We are doing the work in the Roxy Gap area. We have promised the people of Sealy Land. I have travelled that road with you, Sir, and I have looked at the Roxy Gap area. We have completed the Hill Road area and there are many areas that we are looking at to have the work completed. It is part of the programme that the Government has in place in order to rehabilitate the roads in Barbados.

I must also make mention, Mr. Speaker, that sometime at the end of this month or early next month, we are going into the area that people are complaining about which is the area of Deacons Road and Goodland. A lot of the roads in that area were constantly used by the vehicles, especially buses and PSVs, when the Black Rock Road was being done. Deacons Road and Goodland took the brunt of the travelling and also the roads along Fairfield and Wavell Avenue, Clevedale and Seclusion area. They are all earmarked for rehabilitation and we will go on to make sure of that. We also know that BARTEL as well as Light and Power have said they want to do some work in the Deacons Road/Goodland area.

2:55 p.m.

Tuesday, July 09, 2002

Continuation of Hon. R. MARSHALL:

We have given them enough time to go in there and do the work before we get out there. People in Barbados are also asking about the area of Martindale's Road but we are now doing work on the Pine Road and the John Beckles Drive at the same time and taking Martindale's Road out of circulation. We cannot do that and we will have to wait until we have completed the section of the Bridgetown By-Pass Road, the Pine Road and the Culloden and Dalkeith Road before we can attempt to do any work at Martindale's Road.

Sir, Martindale's Road is not just for repaving but the whole road has to be rehabilitated. It is not just a matter of resurfacing and paving. It is not just that simple. It is a road that lies on the bed of the Constitution River and we have to dig the whole road up and make sure we build a new road. That too, Sir, will take some time.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say to this Honourable Chamber that quite recently we did some work at Vineyard, St. Philip and the road is not completed yet. We have compacted in there and the rains are

upon us now. We decided that instead of letting the marl be washed away by the rain that we would put the base court in there. We will go in there very soon and put the final court and curbs inside to make sure that road is completed. The road is about 700 metres long and it has cost the Government some one million dollars to be completed.

Another area we looked at is the road at River.

There has to be a lot of drudge work done and we have to spend another million dollars there. We are continuing the road programme along Four Roads. We are going across Kirtons and we are quite sure that project will be completed.

The Ministry is doing lots of work at this time. As I said, the equipment is here and we have the manpower. We will be asking for additional money for materials and we will put an onslaught on all of the roads in Barbados. The people pay their taxes for good roads and we will make sure that the roads are well maintained.

Mr. Speaker, quite recently we did Phase I in St. George. It has just been completed and we just completed the road at Fair View in Christ Church.

We have done District C going across that area in St. Philip and St. John. The Honourable Member for St. John will be happy to know that some work was done at Glenburnie. I am sure that he is happy with the kind of work we have done. We have done work in the area of Dukes, Christ Church and we have to do some work at Christie Village. We are mindful of what is happening in Barbados. As I said, a lot of the work was held back because of the unavailability of the equipment. Now we have the equipment I am quite sure that we have no excuse for not doing the roads of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I have no objection in supporting this Resolution brought by the Honourable Member for St. George North. I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, I would like to say that in this Resolution most of the land is taken not from the poor but from Kingsland Estate Limited from the Constant Estate Limited. Very small parcels of land are taken, for example, 318.5 square metres from an owner. That is the average. So that the amount of land that is being taken from the people in the area is merely to set back homes and those homes in the path will be resited at Government's expense.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy with this and with those remarks I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

On the motion of Hon. G. A. CLARKE, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, the Resolution passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for

today. In the circumstances, we shall adjourn the Honourable House until Tuesday, July 16, 2002 at 1100 a.m. It is anticipated that next week we will be debating the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, 2002.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn to Tuesday, July 16, 2002 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly.

3:05 p.m.