
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2003 - 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly

met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, December 16, 2003

PRESENT

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

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

Hon. RAWLE C. EASTMOND, B.A.(Hons.),
Dip. Ed.,

LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of
Labour and

Social Security)

Mr. D.J. Thompson, LL.B(Hons)

Mr. L.R. Tull, G.C.,M.A. (Oxon)

Hon. GLINE A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip.
Ed.,J.P. (Minister of Public Works)

Hon. ROMMELL D. MARSHALL
(Chairman of Committees)

Hon. HAMILTON F. LASHLEY (Minister
of Social

Transformation)

Hon. RONALD St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B.

Mr. DENNIS St.E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss H. ELIZABETH THOMPSON,
LL.B. (Minister of Housing, Lands and the
Environment)

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY, Q.C.,LL.B
(Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney-General and
Minister of Home Affairs, (Leader of the
House)

Mr. TREVOR A. PRESCOD, B.A.

Rev. JOSEPH J.S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc.,
J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-
General and Minister of Home Affairs)

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

Hon. ANTHONY P. WOOD, B.Sc., M.Sc.
M.Phil., J.P.

(Minister of Energy and Public Utilities)

Hon. REGINALD R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P.

(Minister of

Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Hon.. Miss CYNTHIA Y. FORDE, J.P.
(Minister of State,

Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and
Sports)

Hon. J.X. WALCOTT, M.B.,B.S. (Edin.),
F.R.C.S.,J.P. (Minister of Health)

Mr. R.D. JONES, B.A. (Hon), M.A (Ed.0,
J.P.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., B.M., B.S

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL, B.Sc.(Econ.)
(Hons.),M.A. (Public Finance), (Leader of the
Opposition)

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, LL.B., (Hons),
L.E.C., (Minister of Industry and International
Business)

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY, LL.B., (Hons)

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B.
(Miniser of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and Foreign Trade)

Dr. W.F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S.,
FDRCS., J.P.

Mr. R.L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan
Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER:The Minutes of Tuesday,

December 9, 2003.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I beg to move
that the Minutes for the Honourable the House
of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday,
December 9,2003, which Minutes have been
circulated, be taken as read.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I
beg to move that the following Orders be laid

1.The Civil Establishment
(General)(Amendment) Order, 2003.

2.The Civil Establishment (Teachers)

(Amendment) Order, 2003.

3.The Civil Establishment (Part-Time
Officers) Order, 2003.

4The Judges (Remuneration and
Pensions)(Conditions of Service and
Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations, 2003.

5. The Ombudsman (Salary) Order, 2003.

6.Parliament (Administration) (Salaries)
Order, 2003

7. Value Added Tax (Refund) (New Way
Auto Repair) Order, 2003

8.The Value Added Tax (Refund)

(J.C Services Inc) Incorporated, Order, 2003

9.Special Develop Areas(ZR Inc) Notice,
2003

10.Duties, Taxes and Other Payment
(Exemption) (Sugar Hill Limited), Order,

2003

11. Duties, Taxes and Other Payment, (Exemption) (W.F. Baird & Associates Coastal Engineers Limited) Order, 2003.

12.The Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 2003

13. Report on the Social Investment Fund for the quarter ending September 30,2003.

14.Annual Report of the Barbados

Broadcasting Authority for the periods October 1999 to September 2000, October 2000 to September 2001 and October 2001 to September 2002.

H14: 10.20 a.mSequence 2

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

10:20 a.m.

Continuation of Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY:

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following

1.The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc. from the period of Incorporation on October 13, 1998 to June 30, 2002 and the year ended June 30, 2003.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following

1.Barbados Accreditation Council Bill 2003.

2.Resolution to grant the sum of \$561 352

from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to Supplement the Estimates 2003-2004 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 7 2003-2004 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Bill be read a first time.

1.Barbados Accreditation Council Bill, 2003.

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: 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: I beg to move, Sir, that Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today(s Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the order of the Day. Order No. 7

ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 2003

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to this Resolution which is currently before the House, in respect of the decision of the Government to be able to bring to a conclusion, a process which commenced some months ago, in respect of the negotiations for salaries, in terms and conditions of the public servants, and a number of other related officers, whose terms and conditions of salaries are tied to the benchmark of public servants in Barbados.

I wish at the outset of this debate, Mr. Speaker, to alert this Honourable Chamber that there are a number of Resolutions on the Order Paper which relate to the same principle. It is therefore the intention of Government to treat the debate on this Resolution, as the major debate covering all of the items pertaining to:

The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) Order,

The Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order,

The Civil Establishment (Part-time Officers) Order,

The Senate and House Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order,

The (Judges Remuneration and Pensions) (Conditions of Services and Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations,

The Governor-General (Condition of Services) Act,

The rates of salaries and allowance to posts of Personal Assistants to Ministers,

The payment of an increased cost of living allowance to Government pensioners and

Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) (Amendment) Bill,

The posts of Personal Assistant, Executive Assistant, Press Secretary, Executive Personal Secretary and Clerical Assistant to the Prime Minister of Barbados.

All of these have been set out in the Schedule in Order 16 on the Order Paper.

I have gone into this detail, Mr. Speaker, because as I indicated, the matters which are currently before this Honourable Chamber in this Resolution, reflect a practice that goes back long before most of us were members of this Honourable Chamber, in relation to the issue of increases for public servants. We use this as a benchmark by which to assess other increases for a whole range of other posts, including political posts, in respect of Members of Parliament, the Governor-General and Judges and, indeed, Mr. Speaker, the allied posts servicing those officers, and finally, as a benchmark for Government pensioners, in respect of their cost of living allowances.

This year, Mr. Speaker, I want to start this debate by first of all, at the end of 2003, thanking yet again, the public servants of Barbados for a sterling contribution, in relation to their work in advancing the cause of the Government and the governance of this country, recognising that while there may still be challenges throughout the service on both sides, that for the most part, Barbados and Barbadians continue to benefit from the quality of service rendered within our public service, especially as compared to other developing countries across the globe.

It is in this context, Mr. Speaker, that I speak of a Government that in 1994 came to office on the understanding that a critical component of our ability to govern was to be able to treat to the question of the welfare of public

servants. Sir, the most fundamental amendment, I believe, that we have passed, in relation to the public service of Barbados, ensures that we would remove from our pattern of governance, the flexibility to be able to treat to the cutting of salaries of public servants again, given the very unfortunate episode of the early 1990s.

It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, because only last week, in preparation for the case in the other matter that is before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, I had cause to read back both the Court of Appeal Judgment and the Privy Council Judgment, in the case of Gladwyn Ophelia King and the Queen. Sir, in so doing, I recognised the significant step that this Government has taken to ensure that a Government of Barbados ought to be able to manage its affairs, economically, without resorting to the cutting of salaries of public servants.

Sir, in the same way that we are prepared to treat to the issue of security of tenure of public servants, we must be prepared to treat their salaries, as a form of property to which they are entitled, without having to suffer the cuts that were inflicted upon them so viciously in 1991, against their consent.

House 15, sequence 3, 10:3014

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

I start this debate, Mr. Speaker, in that context - I will reveal very shortly the details of the agreement between the National Union of Public Workers and the Government of Barbados and the extent to which the Government has tried to reach an agreement also with the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB) on

this matter - because it is my submission that we have tried in the nine years since we have been in Government, and I believe we have succeeded, to improve the terms and conditions of the public servants.

Sir, some workers were hitherto not even entitled to be called public servants who suffered from the vagaries of being casual employees and capable of 24 hours notice for dismissal and who were not benefiting from any security of tenure whatsoever. This Government has put together various packages at various times that have seen considerable improvement of their welfare and the security of the public officers in this country. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be associated with a Government that has treated to this in this manner.

We came to the issue of salaries negotiations this year as we have done in previous years. There are two major unions, the National Union of Public Workers and the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados, with whom the negotiations are conducted. Those who may not have been following developments over the years would not really understand the culture that has become associated with salaries negotiations within the public service. There are those who would want to suggest that we legislate salaries, but, Mr. Speaker, you cannot pay increase salaries without legislating whether there is an agreement or not. So let us set that in its right context first.

The process of legislation is the sine qua non for the legal authority and Government to be able to pay increased salaries. Mr. Speaker, I will come to that further when I treat to the erroneous report in today's Nation Newspaper in respect of whether salaries have been paid to the senior minister, the Honourable Member for the City, since May, without the legal authority of Parliament, thereby suggesting that this

Government is one that is wont to break the law. We must understand that we cannot have the legal authority to pay increased salaries without the legislative process taking place because it is the legislative process that gives one the authority at the Treasury to pay the sums.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, there is no government who would not wish to have a situation where there is a consensus among all unions in the process of negotiations. However, recognising that one can only commit to pay what one can pay without rendering the country exposed to a level of recklessness and fiscally imprudent behaviour, then one has to understand that there would be circumstances where the Government would have to make a determination on the level to which it can go. In most circumstances, there have been agreements over the year with at least one union.

Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that there has only been one occasion ever since we have been the Government of Barbados that there has been an agreement on the part of both unions in respect of the level of increases to be enjoyed by the public servants in this country. In every other instance the National Union of Public Workers, as on this occasion, has agreed and the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados or its precursors has not. In other instances, as on the last occasion, the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados agreed but the National Union of Public Workers did not. Mr. Speaker, one is almost tempted to say that this is almost part of the culture of Barbados in the same way as the Mighty Gabby has said that carrying your children by granny and going to court to collect child money is part of the culture of Barbados.

This is not a situation, as I said, that we will always wish to have, but we recognise that

there is a higher duty to fiscal prudence, the economic stability of this country and the sustainable development of this country. While one may want to be able to go further if one could, one could only do so at the risk of being reckless. In those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, while you would enjoy the fruits in the short term, you would destabilise the country(s) economy and our capacity to enjoy the quality of life that we so do. That was part of our difficulty in the early 1990s. This country went through a job evaluation exercise at a time when it was said that the economy was performing like Gary Sobers, but within less than a year of that, public servants were being asked to take an eight per cent wage cut and 4 000 public servants were sent home. Like any other entity that is charged with the responsibility of employing persons and remaining viable, there must be a commitment to fiscal prudence and the capacity to pay in the long run.

Let me speak to the details, Mr. Speaker, because it is in so speaking that we recognise that it is not only the quantum of the salary increase that is before us that is of benefit to the workers but that there are other decisions which were taken by this Government this year. These decisions would have the capacity of increasing the disposable income of workers in this country in circumstances where that is ultimately the objective of the unions and Government in a salary negotiation process not just to agree to a higher percentage, but what at the end of the day would give workers:

- 1.a greater level of disposable income;
- 2.improve their security;
- 3.improve their other terms and conditions of employment; and
- 4.cause them to be motivated as to be able to even produce more in relation to the task that is

before them. Some of them are financial and others are not.

This year, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Barbados has reached an agreement, as I have indicated and which has been in the news, since September 25, 2003 with the National Union of Public Workers(for two per cent in the first year, three per cent in the second year and three per cent in the third year.

Mr. Speaker, there are some persons in Barbados who may feel that the settlement of a three-year wages agreement is a new thing in the governance of our country, but that is not so. In the 1960s and the early 1970s, it was customary for the Government to reach three-year wage accords. This process only became disturbed in the early 1970s when Barbados began to face a level of inflation that ranged from 12 per cent and peaking at one time to 40 per cent in 1975, such that the Government and the unions of the day recognised that the level of inflation was simply too volatile and too high to be able to settle on a three-year wage accord and a decision was then taken to move to two-year agreements. That process continued until now.

Mr. Speaker, it was the judgement of this Government that there were significant benefits to our moving to a three-year wage accord. We believe that it would allow us more time to deal with non-salaries issues. As I have already indicated, Mr. Speaker, what is of concern is not only the money that is paid but the terms and conditions under which public servants must work within the civil service in Barbados. We also believe that it would allow us to start negotiations earlier with the possibility of reaching an agreement before the expiration of an existing accord. It would allow also us to budget better ahead of time and would ensure that we know what our liabilities are likely to be, so that those responsible for the planning of this economy are in a better position to plan

with a greater degree of certainty rather than being subject to the vagaries of an unknown settlement that is about to come in the ensuing months.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that the offer which we have put on the table and have reached agreement with the National Union of Public Workers, two per cent in the first year, three per cent in the second year and three per cent in the third year, is a fair offer. Mr. Speaker, perhaps I ought to put in context that the initial request on the part of the National Union of Public Workers was a 10 per cent wage increase across the board. On the behalf of Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados it was seven per cent at the top of the salary scale and 10 per cent at the bottom of the salary scale.

House 15 Sequence 4

10:40 a.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, we believe that their figures which would have resulted in an additional \$80 million in expenditures, would have been difficult for the Government to have carried, given the fact that, already in this year, significant concessioners were made in relation to the Income Tax Act, such that the disposable income of public servants and all Barbadians for that matter who are working and paying Income Tax, have increased substantially.

Mr. Speaker, if I may spend two minutes on this topic, to make it graphic. The Government, as your know earlier this year, passed amendments to the Income Tax Act, which has seen from January 01, 2003, a basic rate on Income Tax levied on a taxable income of \$24

000 or less, being reduced from 25 per cent to 22.5 per cent. Therefore, instead of one paying tax at the rate of 25 per cent, this year one would now pay 22.5 per cent in relation to \$24 000 or less.

Mr. Speaker, we have also amended the law to say that as of January 01, 2004, the basic rate of 22.5 per cent will be further reduced to 20 per cent. Therefore, one would pay 20 per cent on the first \$24 000 of tax but equally, whereas before one would not have paid tax on the first \$15 000 of income, one would now no longer pay tax on the first \$17 500 in income earned. Sir, we are therefore, adjusting the basic rate but, at the same time, we are increasing the threshold upon which tax is paid in this country.

Mr. Speaker, from January 01, 2005, we have further adjusted the threshold that instead of paying tax over

\$17 500, one would not pay any additional taxes unless one is earning over \$20 000. For that matter, every person earning an income will not pay taxes on the first \$20 000 earned in income year 2005.

Sir, in addition to the adjustments that we have made on the basic rates, which, as I said, would go from 25 per cent to 22.5 per cent this year, down to 20 per cent next year for the first \$24 000 earned. Sir, but in 2005, we will drop the marginal rate of tax which now stands at 40 per cent now, to 37.5 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, what does all this mean? It is also fair for the average man in the street to ask what does this mean to me. Mr. Speaker, we believe that this would increase, according to the figures calculated, the disposable income next year by 4 per cent, which is more than any amount agreed to in the wage accord. In 2005, it will increase by 6.67 per cent, which is more than doubled the wage increase in any one year

of this three-year accord.

Mr. Speaker, in tangible terms, a messenger in Government, with a gross salary of \$20 230, now earning a disposable income of \$18 920 per year, because of these tax changes, would see that disposable income rise from \$18 920 to \$20 185, an increase of over \$1 310. Sir, this would have resulted, not because of the salary increases here today but because of the adjustments to the Income Tax Act, which have been made by this Government in April, 2003.

Sir, we can go on and show many other examples but the point is simply that the combination of the increase of the disposable income by reason of the income tax adjustments, plus the wage accord over the three years; 2 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent, will see all public servants benefitting substantially beyond that which would have otherwise been contemplated.

Mr. Speaker, we are saying to the country that these tax measures would have a negative impact on Government(s) revenue, as is to be expected. It will cost us \$54 million in this financial year and \$73 million in 2004-2005. In that context, the Government, quite correctly, has said to the unions that this is as far as Government could go with respect to salary increases, and that the unions(proposals which would cost about \$80 million, would have been unsustainable, and that the current package that Government has agreed to would cost approximately \$67 million of increases.

Mr. Speaker, Government already has a wages bill of approximately \$744 million, including that of statutory boards, effectively in what is a \$2.4 billion economy. It is no secret that we have a situation where our wages bill is approximately one-third of the overall Government(s) expenditure. Therefore, one has to marshal one(s) resources carefully and with a sense of prudence because in small open

economies such as ours, the reality is that governmental activity, as compared to developed countries, continues to be the majority of activity within the overall country, and the rate of Government expenditure as it relates to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) tends to be higher in developing countries such as ours, than in developed countries.

Sir, that is largely because of the role that Government must play, insofar as driving the economy, as well as those things which are necessary within the social services, to be able to ensure the level of equity and equality of opportunities to which we, as a country across the political divide, have agreed. Sir, that is the reality of our development, particularly since Independence.

Sir, in every year since 1995, when we have been responsible for treating to the process of salary negotiations, we have ensured that whatever settlement that was agreed upon, would have exceeded that of the inflation rate. Sir, I want to repeat that. Every time that we have come to the bargaining table to treat to public servants of this country, through their unions, this Government of Barbados has never reached an agreement for wage increases that has been less than inflation.

Mr. Speaker, that is out of a commitment to ensure that we continue, even within the parameters of fiscal prudence, to put the concerns of the workers first, in relation to their ability to continue to maintain the quality of life that there were so able to do from year to year.

Mr. Speaker, in 1995-1996, the inflation rate was 2.1 per cent, while the agreement reached was 2.5 per cent at the top, and 3.5 per cent at the bottom. In 1996-1997, the salary increase was 3.5 per cent across the board. In 1997-1998, it was 6 1/4 per cent across the board. In 1998-1999, it was 3 per cent. In 1999-2000, it was 4

per cent. In 2000-2001, it was 2.5 per cent. In 2001-2002, it was 3.5 per cent. In 2002-2003, it is 2.75 per cent across the board.

House No.15(5)10:50 a.m.

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, even at a time when the economy did not grow in 2001 to 2002, this Government still saw it fit to increase public servants(salaries in Barbados. The economy declined by 2.8 per cent in 2001 and there was further decline in 2002 but in spite of that wage increases were 3 per cent in 2001 and 2.75 per cent in 2002 across the board and in every instance, wage increases exceeded the inflation rate in this country.

As a commitment to that precept, the agreement reached with the National Union of Public Workers, will see us going back to the table and should the inflation rate between now and the end of the three-year accord exceed 5 per cent, the Government is committed to revisit the issue of the level of increases.

Mr. Speaker, it may help if the public understands the process undertaken to reach this stage. The Ministry of Civil Service on signifying that the Government was ready to treat to the issue of salary negotiations, sat down with National Union of Public Workers and CTUSAB. The Central Bank of Barbados was also invited to make a presentation to outline its perspective on the state of the economy. It argued that while Barbados(economy has come out of the recession between 2001 and 2002 triggered by international economic developments as well as the events of September 11th, 2001, the growth was not as strong as we would like it even though it was 2 per cent.

This was confirmed by the Prime Minister(s Economic and Financial Statement to this Honourable Chamber where he intimated that while the economy has been experiencing 2 per cent growth, it is our desire and hope in the medium term to ensure that we can reach 3 per cent growth to meet the demands that the Government feels it should legitimately meet to improve the quality of life and the opportunity for wealth creation in this country.

The Central Bank of Barbados set its perspective and urge the Government, as the Prime Minister went on record as saying, that there was a need to manage the fiscal deficit more carefully. This Government took a deliberate policy decision after September 11th to run a counter-cyclical fiscal deficit, in other words, one higher than we would otherwise run, recognising that we had to provide the buffer in circumstances where other parts of the economy, particularly the private sector would not have been able to do so, largely as a result of the pressure being faced both by international economic downturn, the crash in the stock exchange and the tragic events of September 11th which compounded an already bad situation.

In those circumstances, the Government ran a higher fiscal deficit and also borrowed to ensure that we would have the opportunity at a time when our credit rating was excellent to be able to withstand any eventuality that may come our way. We took the decision that funds borrowed should be treated to building productive capacity in this country rather than sitting idly earning minimal interest rates.

Mr. Speaker, a further meeting took place between the Government and CTUSAB on November 20, 2003. If you remember, I indicated to you earlier that the agreement with National Union of Public Workers was reached on September 25, 2003 and at that meeting, we tried again to see whether there was any

common ground that could be reached at that point. Sir, CTUSAB were effectively requesting 11 per cent increase, 2.5 per cent the first year, 3.5 per cent in the second year and 5 per cent in the third year. They argued that to accept a three-year agreement, in their opinion, that the offer in the third year should be more attractive than those made in year one and two.

Mr. Speaker, two points need to be made in this respect. First, that increases are calculated on a compounded basis and as such, in the third year, salaries would be the same, irrespective of how the figures are configured.

Secondly, in aggregate terms, it is more beneficial for the salary increases of the workers to be front-loaded, for example, that workers have the higher figure earlier rather than later, largely because they will get access to the money quicker and for a longer period of time. In fact, in aggregate terms an officer at the bottom of the Z-38 scale in Government will receive \$90.24 more if the salaries are front-loaded, as we tried to do with the matter before this Honourable Chamber today.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, when the Ministry of Civil Service met with CUTSAB on November 20, 2003, they sought to argue that the figure at which we come back to table in relation to any increase in inflation, instead of being 5 per cent that it should be 2 per cent or 3 per cent. Indeed, we intimated to them that the figure of 5 per cent was not pulled out of a hat by the Government but was determined by the Central Bank of Barbados, in its wisdom, with the information available to them and that Government could not agree to come back to the table in circumstances where the inflation exceeded 2 per cent or 3 per cent.

H15/11:00Sequence 6

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY

Mr. Speaker, then CTUSAB sought to put on the table that there should be a productivity payment as a condition for its acceptance of this 8 per cent increase over the three years.

Mr. Speaker, this too was rejected by the Government because in fairness, there was no effective methodology which has been devised on which to calculate that productivity payment. It would simply be agreeing to something for the sake of agreeing to it, in circumstances where you could not implement it in a transparent manner that would be to the benefit to public servants across the civil service. Therefore, it would only be to say that I gave you something else to get you to agree to the 8 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that whatever we agree to, that at the end of the day, must be capable of implementation and fairness in the implementation if we are not to create problems in the governance of this country.

Sir, there was a proposal by CTUSAB which the Government has agreed to explore. At that meeting CTUSAB also put on the table the possibility of the introduction of a medical scheme for public officers that could be equally funded by Government and public officers. The current circumstances are that public servants who have medical insurance do so through the Scheme of the National Union of Public Workers scheme or any other scheme that they may wish to belong to but they fund it themselves. Sir, CTUSAB put on the table that there should be a funded scheme met by both the Government and the workers or by Government alone.

Sir, we have said that we are not prepared to dismiss a reasonable request for exploring this but we would look at it just as we have treated in the past to suggestions from the Barbados

Union of Teacher that part-time teachers should be paid for bank holidays while they are working during the term.

Sir, as Minister of Education at that time, I remember how that matter agitated within the ranks of the Barbados Union of Teachers. Indeed, I am happy that this Government was able to meet that request.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central might remember those early days of this Government when he was one of those persons putting forward that reasonable request on the part of part-time teachers in this system.

This Government met the reasonable request of those in relation to the question of pension arrangements, recognising that people who have been in posts as temporary officers, should have the right that if they spend three years acting in a higher post and receiving a higher salary, or the last three out of five years acting in a post, that when they retire their pension should not be tied to the lower amount of their appointed established post but it should be to the level which they worked for the last three years or the last three out of the last five years.

Mr. Speaker, we also considered it to be a reasonable request to increase the allowances, and in most cases since 1995, in excess of 25 per cent across the public service for nurses and policemen. There were increases in laundry allowances for police officers, fireofficers and prison officers; shoe allowances for nurses; duty-free motor cycles for postmen, recognising that this is a tool of trade for them and it would help that to increase their disposable income by not having to spend more money on duty; we have increased entertainment allowance and allowances for doctors. Sir, we found it possible to come to this Parliament in 1998 and convert 4 000 casual workers to public officers in this

country.

Asides

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I always hear a lot of talk from the Opposition but I want to say in this context that those 4 000 casual workers could not go into any bank in Bridgetown and acquire mortgages. They could not get any kind of long-term loan to help them with medical expenses or any emergency in the families. Sir, when you walk the length and breadth of Barbados and you speak to people who were previously casual employees, they are entirely grateful for the security that this Government has provided them; they are grateful for the psychological relief of knowing that they cannot be dismissed with twenty-four hours notice. Mr. Speaker, above all else, they are grateful that when a casual worker earning \$14 000 a year, instead of taking home \$14 000 as he would have as a casual worker, they are now carrying home twice that amount. They take home \$29 000 as a lump sum payment and then instead of waiting until they reach the age of sixty-five to receive a National Insurance pension, at the age of sixty they can receive a Government pension to the age of sixty-five and then they would receive the National Insurance pension.

Asides

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I see Members of the Opposition looking surprised but those are the facts.

There are some people who might want to suggest that it is difficult to understand why no previous Government would have corrected this unfortunate anomaly in the public service in Barbados before, such that we do not have two classes of employees within the public service and such that the precepts of equity and fairness should attach itself to all who are public servants in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we have in addition made a concerted effort to establish permanent posts to allow temporary officers to be appointed and to receive that benefit. In 1997, 681 people were appointed, having had the post converted from temporary to permanent. In 1998, 661 were appointed; in 1999, 1 365 people were appointed; in 2000, 4 010 people benefited from the establishment of posts and as at May 2001, 427 posts were established.

Mr. Speaker, a total of 7 200 posts were established total + 7154 between 1997 and 2001.

Sir, this is not a net increase in the number of persons employed by Government. Sir, this is regularising a situation. It is fair to say, and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would appreciate this, that the only persons with less security of tenure than casual workers are politicians. Sir, casual workers would, at least, get twenty-four hours notice but a politician will get a minute.

Asides

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I am saying this in context with the Constitution Amendment, which I had cause to draw reference to before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council last week. This Government has the confidence that we can so prudently manage our affairs economically that we would not have to resort to what the Democratic Labour Party resorted to by cutting people(s) salaries against their will.

Asides

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: There are people in this country who have not recovered after a decade and are still reeling from the experience that destroyed families. Sir, people separated in marriages because of the pressure imposed on them when nobody in the home

was working and where addictions, in some instances, were developed.

Sir, I talk about a caring Government, I do not believe in political rhetoric for the sake of political rhetoric. I believe that we have a responsibility to govern in circumstances where we treat to people respecting the individual dignity of each human being.

H14: 11.10 a.m.Sequence 7

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

11:10 a.m.

Continuation of Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY:

Sir, I want to say that we must take care of people(s) circumstances in terms of their pockets, but this Government recognises that there are other things which affect people(s) ability to come to work and produce.

Mr. Speaker, for the last three or four years, every year in the Estimates of Expenditure in the Government, we put in a sum of money to pay for counselling and treatment of public servants in this country, in circumstances where there may be addictions to alcohol and other forms of substances, and in circumstances where there may be serious psychological problems, as a result of bereavement or mental difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Programme, known as Network Services has been of considerable benefit to hundreds of public servants in this country...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: The Employee Assistance Programme, I believe that Network Services is the company that provides the service.

Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of public servants who have benefited from this Programme and who can attest to the fact that they have not had to pull their pockets in order to be able to get themselves back into a state of readiness, not just to work, but to continue their life and their responsibilities to themselves and their families. Mr. Speaker, all of these things have been put in place.

Sir, when the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB), therefore, has put on the table that we should look to the issue of a medical insurance scheme, we have not dismissed it out of hand. We believe it is a reasonable request for them and the Government to sit down and see how feasible it is, recognising that there are limits, however, to what a Government can and cannot do, and that in the overall objective of trying to maintain fiscal prudence, we would try to treat to matters with a seriousness that is reflected by our record in office, since we have been the Government of this country.

Mr. Speaker, there are other things. We said to the country some two and a half to three years ago, that the time had come for another job evaluation exercise to be carried out. This one would not in any way reflect the preposterous one that was done in 1989/90 by the last Government, where a hand full of people at the top of the civil service carried home wheelbarrows of money and, those at the bottom were forced to stand outside and watch and suffer, while they got nothing.

Mr. Speaker, that exercise bore no relationship to the nature of the jobs, and it bore no relationship to an objective analysis of the relativities of the jobs within the public service. We committed that, as part of a progressive human resource policy on the part of the Government of Barbados that we had to undertake an exercise that would look at the

2000 or more posts, within the public service, to treat to the issue of job description and content, and treat to the issue of appropriate relativities such that there can be a level of transparency in the management of the programme, relating to human resource development.

Mr. Speaker, on the 3rd of August 2000, the Cabinet of Barbados agreed that the job evaluation exercise should be conducted and that it would be done in two phases. The first, as was to be expected, is a diagnostic phase. In other words, you would go through each job, make the appropriate diagnosis in relation to each job. The second is a developmental and an operational phase.

One year after that initial decision in August of 2000, on 9th August 2001, the Cabinet received and noted the report of the diagnostic phase. We then determined that Phase 2 of the exercise, which involved the actual evaluation of all jobs in the public service, would then be embarked upon and completed by September 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report to this Honourable Chamber that the recommendations are currently being accessed. It is anticipated that it would go to Cabinet shortly, and it will be the subject of discussions between the trade unions and the Government of Barbados, such that we can move the process to a stage of completion. I am sure that the promise which we gave in 2000 to the public of Barbados and the public service, in particular, can be kept.

Mr. Speaker, we knew it would be a lengthy process but we assured the public servants that if we were to treat to developing a system that would be transparent and fair, we needed to go through the process of diagnosing each job, doing the evaluations, setting the relativities and then implementing them.

Mr. Speaker, the process, as you know, has received strategic direction from a committee, which was headed by the Head of the Civil Service. It had representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Civil Service, the Director of Public Sector Reform, the same Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB), and the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW). Therefore, the Government remained faithful in ensuring that there were representatives in the Committee that gave strategic direction, so that the workers(representatives were in fact treated to.

The actual evaluation of jobs, Mr. Speaker, has been undertaken by a 13-member committee, made up of five representatives, nominated by CTUSAB, including the NUPW, four nominated by the Head of the Civil Service and four staff members of the Ministry of the Civil Service, excluding the Permanent Secretary, because that is the Ministry which treats to these matters on a day to day basis.

Mr. Speaker, members of that Committee underwent intensive training in the theory and in the practice of job evaluation, such that we could get the best and the fairest possible outcome. I believe that it has resulted in a number of recommendations with the majority of them seeing 3 000 posts being recommended to be upgraded, and 200 being recommended to be downgraded. May I say at the outset, though, Mr. Speaker, that no post which is downgraded will affect any current holder of a post, but only those which are future appointments, because of the principle of the contract of employment between the employee and the Government.

I repeat, Sir, more than 3 000 posts stand to be regraded and upgraded in the public service of Barbados. We anxiously await the completion of that process and as I said, those

are just recommendations, which must now become the subject of consultations between the Ministry of the Civil Service and the Trade Unions of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Government continues to be committed to a progressive training programme. Last year, almost 200 public officers were given full pay leave to go and upgrade their skills. Almost 200 public officers continue to receive their full salaries, while receiving training or some form of further education, particularly in the areas of health and education.

Mr. Speaker, we have committed to this process.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to speak because in my Ministry in particular, on or about the time we embarked on the job evaluation exercise, the Government of Barbados agreed that there was a situation which needed urgent remedy, and that was the situation of nurses, police officers and prison officers, who had to work beyond their normal hours, in order to do their jobs appropriately, but who, nevertheless, were not receiving the benefits from it. Therefore, we introduced what has become known as a flexible responsibility allowance.

House 15, sequence 8, 11:2014

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, the flexible responsibility allowance was simply aimed at compensating police officers, prison officers and nurses for the many extra hours work beyond the duty hours they are required to work. For example, in the Criminal Investigation Department inspectors used to draw \$100 as a duty allowance before but now we are able to give

them \$500 instead of that \$100; a station sergeant has moved from \$80 to \$400; a sergeant has moved from \$80 to \$400 and a constable has moved from \$60 to \$300.

The hourly rates for the flexible allowances are as follows. At the level of an assistant superintendent, it is \$27 an hour, at the level of an inspector it is \$24 an hour, at the level of station sergeant it is \$22 an hour, at the level of a sergeant it is \$20 an hour and at the level of a constable it is \$18 an hour. Mr. Speaker, prison officers and nurses would have received similar rates.

Mr. Speaker, anyone who knows how the police force and the courts function would know that when police officers who were off duty had to attend court there were difficulties because they were off duty but they still had to go to court and give evidence. What we have done, Mr. Speaker, is to say that when they are off duty and they must go to court that we would pay them at a standard rate for five hours whether they are there for two hours, three hours or four hours.

Mr. Speaker, I must confess that while there were some teething problems in the first year, we have seen considerable improvement in the administration of the flexible responsibility allowance. This is made graphic by the figures. In 2001, the Police Department paid out some \$318 000 in flexible responsibility allowance. By 2002 they paid out \$725 000, which is more than double the amount they paid out in 2001.

In relation to the nurses, they received \$85 000 in 2001, by 2002 they received almost \$300 000 which is more than three times the amount they received in 2001. Therefore, you can see that there has been considerable improvement in the administration of it.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that the flexible responsibility allowance has been successful in

helping to motivate the prison officers, the nurses and the police officers to carry out additional duties. This has clearly reflected a commitment to tying compensation to work beyond the normal duty and rewarding those for so committing themselves and offering their services which is only fair.

Mr. Speaker, we have come here as I said to treat to a three-year accord which would cost the Government of Barbados in this first year 2003-2004, which is almost finished, \$16.9 million, in the full financial year of 2004-2005, \$26.3 million and in 2005-2006, \$26.6 million. Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that these salaries increases of two per cent, three per cent and three per cent, over the three years cannot be divorced from the fact that:

1.it exceeds what is the projected inflation rate as it has done every year for the last nine years;

2.it exceeds in the circumstances that should the inflation rate go about the five per cent as recommended by the Central Bank, we will come back to the table;

3.it is in addition to a considerable increase in disposable income as a result of the income tax amendments by lowering the basic rate of income tax, increasing the level at which you pay income tax and lowering the marginal rate of tax coming at a time that those who are public servants and owned property will no longer have to pay land tax in this country if their properties are valued below \$150 000.

As a result more than 18 000 taxpayers of land tax were taken off the roll in this country.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot look at all of these things in isolation. Mr. Speaker, it comes at a time when we have seen a considerable increase in the benefits to public servants over the last few years as I outlined in this speech.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you that there are still things to be done. I would never get here and suggest that all is well and rosy because they would always be things to be done. I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that we can do other things better. That is one of the reasons we are going to bring a Bill before this Chamber very shortly to introduce a new Public Service Act because we believe that there is a Byzantine set of regulations and laws that currently governed the functioning of the Public Service that needs to be simplified to allow us to treat to issues relating to promotion, discipline, opportunities, evaluations and to hiring in a more transparent way that will redound to the benefit not just of the public servants of Barbados but indeed to all members of this society.

Mr. Speaker, in the last Parliament we would have debated the report which would be the foundation for the drafting of that legislation, and like the job evaluation exercise, we have explained to the public of Barbados that there is a process to these things. You simply cannot change the context within which 27 000 people work overnight or in a whimsical manner. In those circumstances, we have gone through the most detailed and consultative process in seeking to bring about the first major change in the legislation, in modern Barbados, governing the public service of Barbados.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, within the next few months of us being able to bring this matter here after we complete the consultative process on the Bill itself with the trade unions and the persons so affected. We would have treated to them on the report and they would have been part of the committee that led to the report but we are now treating to them on the Bill. I have had the good fortune in seeing the first draft of that Bill. We are in the process of making amendments to present a second draft which would be the basis for consultation early in the new year between the Ministry of the Civil Service and the trade unions of Barbados so

that we can bring this process to a legitimate conclusion to the benefit of all of us.

Mr. Speaker, we come today to treat to these issues. There is one matter, since I gave notice of the fact that we are treating to all of these Resolutions in this one debate, that I would wish to advert to. In May of this year after the general elections, the Prime Minister intimated to me and to the public that he would wish me to serve as his deputy Prime Minister, and I so accepted. He intimated as well that he would wish to follow the tradition of many Commonwealth countries, Singapore in particular, where he would seek to create a new form of designation within the Cabinet of Barbados and to designate the Honourable Member for the City, so recently elevated within the last month, to the post of Senior Minister. This is a post that is normally accorded to persons who have served with distinction in Cabinets across the Commonwealth.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, those who are familiar with Singapore will know that the former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew continues to serve in the Cabinet of Singapore when he stepped down, not as Prime Minister but as a Senior Minister in circumstances where this special privilege was designated to him.

House 15 Sequence 9

11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, part of the difficulty that I would have adverted to at the beginning of this debate is that there is no legal authority to pay anyone who is employed in the public service or as Honourable Members of Cabinet,

Honourable Members of Parliament, Governor-General, Ombudsman, et cetera, without the authority of Parliament.

Therefore, what is included here today is a recommendation to this Honourable Chamber that given the fact that the Prime Minister, since we last would have treated to salary revisions in this country, has created a new post of Senior Minister for the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown in recognition of her distinguished service and also wishing to ensure her continued service in the Cabinet of Barbados, that we so create that post and peg it to terms and conditions which are at the level of the Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a matter that ought to divide the Honourable House because I believe that all of us would have recognised that the Honourable Member for the City has more than distinguished herself, not only in this Parliament but throughout the Commonwealth, and continues to hold the distinction of being the only woman ever to be in charge of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; of being a former President of the Inter-American President Planned Parenthood Federation, the regional body for population planning in this hemisphere; of being accorded the distinguished responsibility of organising in Cairo for the population conference the forum for non-Governmental organisations; of being accorded the privilege of heading the Advisory Group for the Inter-American Development Bank on women(s) issues.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is an issue that would find no divide between the two sides of the Honourable House and as a matured parliamentary democracy that we, like other countries in the Commonwealth, know how to treat to these matters with the level of distinction and fair play that is required.

Mr. Speaker, I, therefore, would recommend

to this Honourable Chamber the Resolution which would formally seek to create the post Senior Minister as an established post but that would also seek to ensure that the terms and conditions of the Senior Minister are pegged at the level of a Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados. Sir, this is a post, not just accorded to anyone and everyone but that it is reserved for those persons who have served with distinction within our systems of Government within the Commonwealth.

Mr. Speaker, may I say that I believe we have to correct the unfortunate statement which I know was made not out of malice but perhaps out of a lack of information, which appeared in the front page of the Nation Newspaper, dated December 16, 2003, with reference to the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown being paid at that level since May 2003, without legislative authority being provided.

Sir, while the newspaper did not say without legislative authority being provided, that was the natural imputation because the only way that the Honourable Member could have been paid at that level is if this Honourable Chamber has agreed to it.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: No, it is not retroactive. Therefore, in those circumstances, this matter stands before this Honourable Chamber for its approval today, as the Senior Minister would have only received the emoluments of a normal Minister of the Cabinet, over the course of the last six months.

Sir, for those who might want to suggest or to think otherwise, let us remember that we are still a country that is governed by the rule of law and would wish to continue to be so.

Mr. Speaker, these matters stand before this

Honourable Chamber for its approval. Mr. Speaker, may I remind the Honourable Chamber that there is a convention that would see similar increases for judges, the Governor-General, holders of political office and for holders of part-time office, on the 2 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent rate increases for the three-year period. As Your Honour would know, those officers have received that increase without the right to negotiate like the other public servants of Barbados, so that in a way, they might even be in a worse position than the public servants because, as holders of political, part-time or judicial office, they do not have the right to determine the level of increases.

Equally, it is also to be noted that monetary allowances, as tradition has had, would be increased in a similar fashion. Salaries are paid and increase allowances are paid in a similar ratio to what is being proposed here for salaries. Sir, in respect to the cost of living allowance for Government pensioners, which is pegged at two-thirds of the increase, recognising that pensioners benefit from a better tax position and the level of the increase is, therefore, not necessary required to be the same.

Mr. Speaker, we propose that these customs should continue. I, therefore, wish to commend on the behalf of this Government, on the behalf of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and the Civil Service, and the Right Honourable Prime Minister, that what is before us is worthy of support; that it represents a fair settlement to all public servants and to all other persons; that it is not to be seen in isolation or to be divorced from other improvements which the Government has made in relation to income tax amendments, land tax reductions of rates and to other improvements in terms and conditions, et cetera.

Sir, I have forgotten to refer to what we have agreed upon on the last occasion, that is, where

a policeman has died in the course of duty, we have agreed that we should pay that family at least five times that police(s) annual salary. These are all things that have never before existed.

Mr. Speaker, I, therefore, feel proud that from the point of philosophical perspective as to how we should treat public servants; to the reality of their improvement in terms and conditions; to their improvement in salary increases outstripping inflation rates on each occasion; to the point of the convergence of casual officers to permanent posts, that this Government(s) record stands proud. Sir, we entreat all Barbadians who are public servants, in particular, to realise that there is still a long way to go for us to achieve the full goal of Public Sector Reform. We must ensure that we could treat to a modern public service in ways that allow all Barbadians to benefit fully in our development. Sir, we would continue being committed to this process. Mr. Speaker, I trust and hope that all Barbados would rise to the occasion.

We have also expressed concerns in relation to the level of sick leave and to other matters within the public service but we believe that those are manageable problems which could be treated to in good faith. We believe that all persons ultimately work in the cause of this great country, whether as public servants, politicians or as members of civil society.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that we have also gone beyond the call of duty. After reaching the agreement with the National Union of Public Workers, we sought, yet again in good faith, to meet with the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) in November. Mr. Speaker, we have held these increases for 2 1/2 months, in the hope that we could have reached, if possible, a consensus with the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB).

Mr. Speaker, as has been the culture, this year it is the one union and not the other. The next year it is the other union and not the first. It has only been on one occasion that we have reached a complete agreement with both unions, in circumstances where we have agreed to what Government is capable of affording, without allowing the country to be plunged into the kind of reckless financial disorder that was seen in the early 1990s, when the Leader of the Opposition and others, had the opportunity to advise the then Government of the day as to how far they should have gone in respect of the increases and in the improvements of allowances.

House No.15(10)11:40 a.m.

Thursday, December 9, 2003

Continuation of Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet office is indicating to me that the salary is retroactive to the date of appointment in respect to the Senior Minister and I apologise for that fact.

I wish to make the important point that it has not been paid because it cannot be paid without the legal authority of Parliament. In the same way that Parliament had to come and make right pension arrangements for Honourable Members of Parliament because of how elections were called in 1994, we accepted the responsibility that persons should not be disadvantaged in public life irrespective of what side they have served on. It is a principle that both political parties have accepted in circumstances where there is a level of fairness, equity and transparency and I wish to commend all of these matters to this Honourable House for its most worthy support.

I want to say that I regret that I could not have come here today and say that we have had

the agreement of both unions but that, unfortunately, has now become part of our culture among other things. Mr. Speaker, we trust that before the end of December that all public servants will receive the new salary increase and those charged with the responsibility of ensuring that people are paid will receive the appropriate instruments to ensure that even if the back-pay is not received before Christmas, at least workers will receive the new level of salary as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I commend these matters to you and ask that this Honourable House support this Resolution before it.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you said this morning that most of these Resolution will be carried together but I want to remind you that Item No. 15 is a Bill and would have to be presented on its own.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, when Item No. 15 is presented, it would not be treated to a full debate as I did this morning. I want, for the benefit of both side of the House, for Honourable Members to know that we are treating to a wide debate and not a narrow one.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I join this debate and at the outset ask the basic question, are public workers better off today than they were nine years ago. I will seek to answer this question in this debate and in the light of it, try to justify why there should be consideration of a better package for the public sector workers of Barbados. Sir, the question of affordability is always paramount in any negotiation and settlement between unions and employers. This Government has stated quite clearly, based on recent measures, that it has the financial resources to pay public sector workers a better increase in salary.

We heard boast about the income tax reduction over the next several years and we

also heard discussion about the land tax reduction in Barbados so it cannot be the case that the Government of Barbados is incapable of paying public sector workers a better income. The question of affordability goes out of the window because the Government can afford to pay a better salary in terms of wage and salary increases.

Before I get into the presentation, I want to debate the Leader of the House on several matters. The Attorney-General has indicated that there will be an adjustment in the basic rates of the marginal tax rates of Barbados which means that all persons presently paying taxes in Barbados will stand to benefit from any such adjustment. The Minister also indicated that there will be adjustments to the basic allowances over the next few years. In that light, I wish to argue that CUTSAB is on good grounds when it is suggesting that there should be a two-tier system of salary increases in Barbados today and that there should not be any across-the-board increase in salaries for public sector workers. I will argue simply on the basis that a reduction in the marginal tax rate can only affect persons who pay taxes and that there are several persons in Barbados who currently earn below the existing threshold.

Therefore, this mean that the Government is almost agreeing in principle with the IMF to increase disposal incomes of public sector workers via an income tax reduction and that there are several persons working within the public sector who would not derive any benefit from the reduction in the marginal tax rates.

Mr. Speaker, we must understand that in developing countries, particularly in economies like the Caribbean, that the public sector sets the agenda for wage increases across the economy and in many instances the public sector leads in terms of fixing salaries and wages in the economy. Therefore, we cannot use reduced marginal tax rates as the basis for

arguing effectively across the board in the overall public sector negotiations. As I said before, it means that workers at the bottom of the salary scale should be entitled to a greater percentage increase than workers at the top of the scale simply because we expect and anticipate that the more taxes you pay the greater the benefit of adjustments to marginal tax rates.

Mr. Speaker, we must also accept that the persons most in need of increased disposal incomes would be those at the bottom of the salary scale. Therefore, I cannot stand in here today and agree in this environment to an across-the-board increase for public sector workers especially when it is quite obvious that the Government is preparing to use marginal tax adjustments to increase disposal incomes of workers when at the same time there are several thousand workers in Barbados who earn below the income tax threshold who cannot benefit from reduction in the marginal tax rate.

H15/11:50Sequence 11

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. C.A. MASCOLL We cannot use that as an argument. Therefore, there is justification in today(s Barbados for using a two-tier system of salary increases as I speak to you.

I am in total agreement with the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) that there should be a two-tier adjustment in salaries. If Government is saying that it is capable of giving relief to workers in Barbados, it means that Government is in a position to accept a lower level of revenue over the next couple of years. Government could have increased the salaries of public sector workers, which would be similar in terms of the impact on its fiscal deficit to a reduction in revenue.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that if Government could afford to give a \$30 million reduction in taxes to all Barbadian workers, then Government could afford to give public sector workers a greater increase in salary because the overall effect is going to be the same on the fiscal deficit.

The question is, are we catering to the needs of public sector workers at this stage or are we going across the board?

I am suggesting that the Government is the employer of public sector workers and given the experiences over the last nine years in terms of economic goals, the build up in the foreign reserves, albeit substantially the result of borrowings. Sir, given the overall health of the economy, it means that Government would be in a better position to afford salary increases that would allow the average public sector worker to feel as if he or she is part of the process since 1994.

We all know that since 1994 and particularly beyond 1997, that the Government of Barbados benefited substantially from the introduction of Value Added Tax. It was possible to implement a Value Added Tax at the rate of 12 per cent rather than 15 per cent to cover the revenue that was lost from the removal from the existing taxes in 1997.

It was not surprising when the representative for St. Lucy made the observation that this Government would derive in excess of \$200 million more in revenue than required because we all knew that a 15 per cent rate would have derived substantial revenue for Government. The evidence is very clear since 1997 on that matter.

Mr. Speaker, the evidence is also clear that the traditional private sector in Barbados was able to derive substantial profit over the last

eight years. If we want evidence of it we only need to look at the corporate tax take in Barbados. Let us not be sidetracked by the talk about the international business sector contribution to the overall corporate tax take. Let us understand that the existing traditional business sector was able to derive substantial profitability over the last nine years.

Sir, when we look at the social partnership, it means that the only category that did not benefit as a result of the social partnership over the last ten years would have been the workers of Barbados. I am saying that it makes no sense at this stage to continue to go forward in reverse and to look back at 1991/1992. There is clear evidence that has been put in the public domain that before 1994 we had seen a recovery in the economy, increased health in the fiscal deficit in Barbados, increased health in the foreign reserves of Barbados, employment creation and increased profitability but when you look at the reality, the average worker has not substantially benefited and I will demonstrate that later in my speech.

I want to demonstrate that the public sector workers who carry the burden of the adjustment in the early 1991/1992 period should have been the ones who experienced benefit resulting from the return to health of the economy and the overall performance of all of the sectors in the economy but that has not happened.

The Leader of Government Business said that Government activity dominates in developing states in the Caribbean, and it does, and all socialists would like that. We also have to respect that in a competitive environment, this new global era, that the overall concern is really the size of the public sector and the ability of the public sector to deliver efficiently and effectively in the new global economy.

We are going to confront a dichotomy of sorts in which we are being threatened as a government in terms of the provision of services, and I speak of government widely, in a global era that is requiring us to have less government. We are starting to see the evidence of less government. This Government refused to allow Trinidadians to invest in the Pine Hill Dairy, a manufacturing plant that would have allowed the Pine Hill Dairy to have a larger market, access to greater financial resources and the potential to export. This Government, which fought steadfastly against Trinidadians investing in the Pine Hill Dairy, is now able almost overnight to allow them to invest in the financial services sector and the insurance services sector.

I am saying that a forward-looking government would have recognised that it would have been more beneficial for Barbados, if Trinidadian investors got involved in manufacturing entities in Barbados and not be at the centre of our economy, which is the financial sector. We are now giving way, almost without thought, our financial services sector. We did not allow the entry of the Trinidad investors at time and that was short-sighted.

Sir, I spoke to the issue of where we should locate manufacturing entities and I was lambasted by the other side and even by a Pan-Africanists who should understand the need for a social conscience, the need for the coming together of the region and the brothers within the diaspora. In his own myopic way he sought to castigate me as unpatriotic when I was only speaking to a wider Caribbean at the time. We are now seeing, rather than having had the opportunity as a Government to embrace financial resources from the region, we are now embracing their financial resources in areas that we have done particularly well over the last few decades. We would have preferred to have had the assistance in those other areas such as

manufacturing.

Governments will dominate in countries that are socially conscious, countries that are democratic and socialist in principle. While there has been a dominance of the government sector in the post 1994 era in Barbados, the actual provision of social services has suffered, for example, the hospital. We can also look at other social services in Barbados and see that in spite of the so-called economic growth, there has been a deterioration in several areas of the social services in Barbados, which is contrary to what should have been happening.

H:14 12.00Sequence 12

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

12:00 Noon

Continuation of Mr. C.A. MASCOLL:

Therefore, when you evaluate this Government on the basis of its ability to cater to the needs of the average Barbadian, you will recognise that it has failed and there has been a decline.

Sir, the Leader of Government Business put a lot of emphasis on inflation and how, over the last three or four negotiations, we have been able to derive increases in wages and salaries above inflation. Mr. Speaker, let me say here now that the retail price index which is used to measure inflation in Barbados is inadequate. I do not mean to come down on the Barbados Statistical Service, I do not mean to attack public servants, I am simply suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that post-1997, when we had a VAT that was imposed on both goods and services, that the structure of the retail price index, was never expected to pick up the impact of taxes on services. Therefore, the retail price index was never designed to see or to gauge the impact of a value added tax.

As I speak to you, Mr. Speaker, the ladies of Barbados are able to go and have their hair permed, to go and get the eye shadow and facials and such things, but whenever they go for such services, they are actually charged VAT. Whenever tourists use particular services in Barbados, there is a VAT applied. Whenever we go for even legal, financial, accounting, architectural or other services, we have to pay a VAT.

Mr. Speaker, the retail price index does not capture the impact of such an imposition on those services. Therefore, the retail price index is inadequate as a measure of inflation in Barbados and it should not be used as the basis for salary increases across the board. It is a fact of life. There is a need to revamp, reconsider and redesign the retail price index because it is hurting the workers of Barbados.

How on earth could we have experienced inflation in Barbados over the last couple of years of less than 2 per cent per annum?

Asides.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: You do not live in Barbados? Mr. Speaker, I live in Barbados, and several other Barbadians know that the rate of increase in prices has exceeded 2 per cent. There is a difference between distance and speed. Inflation is likened to acceleration, as opposed to speed. It is the rate at which prices move, it is not the level, so the rate at which prices move could not have been simply 2 per cent over the last several years. It is an inadequate measure, so all the boast about salary increased, having gone beyond the increase prices is not true.

Asides.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: It cannot be true in Barbados, not as we speak. I am saying, quite

openly, that there needs to be a revision of that retail price index.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of Government Business argues that when the economy did not grow in 2001 to 2002, there were salary increases. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if you extend that argument, it means that whenever an economy is in recession or in crisis, there should be a salary reduction, according to the argument put forward by the Leader of Government Business. It does not make sense.

I am saying that you cannot use a simple argument of growth as an indicator as to whether or not there should be salary increases. You cannot confine it and tie it down to such a simple indicator. You have to be careful when using logic and that was the attempt to suggest an idle boast, that even when the economy did not grow, we paid salary increases.

Asides.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Sir, when the economy did not grow, Government revenue grew substantially, even during that period, and the evidence is clear, so it cannot be on the basis on just economic growth.

The Leader of Government Business said that salary increases were front-loaded. I do not know what she means by front-loaded. In fact, as far as I understand it, we have a three-year contract, in which there would be a 2 per cent in the first year, a 3 per cent in the second year and a 3 per cent in the third year.

Sir, my understanding of a front-load is that you pay much more up-front, and then it gets lower over time, so this cannot be front-loading, because front-loading would have meant that perhaps you paid 5 per cent, followed by a 2 per cent, followed by a 1 per cent. It would be the same 8 per cent overall but it would be substantially different, so this is

not front-loading, as far as I know it, so that has to be addressed as well.

Aside.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: You can forget the Leader of Government Business who tried as best she could to extend the debate and it was very repetitive this morning.

I will deal with some issues she has addressed, the question of inflation at 5 per cent which is supposed to be a signal that the Government would come back to the bargaining table. I sat in amazement because we have heard, and there is evidence to show, that there was even what we call disinflation in this economy in 1998, that is the inflation rate did not increase and prices did not grow. They went down in terms of the rate of growth. So if you were driving a car and you heard a noise of acceleration, then deceleration, the rate of growth has gone the other side.

Mr. Speaker, could you imagine that over the last five years or so in Barbados, since 1998, that we have had, according to the official price index, minus 1.2 per cent, that is deflation, and 1.6 inflation in 1999, and 2.4 per cent in the year 2000. Sir, if you sum these together, that is 2.4, 1.6 that is 4.0, minus 1.2 that is 2.8 divided by 3, that is roughly .9.

I am saying how on earth could anyone then project that when inflation reaches 5 per cent that we will come back to the bargaining table in Barbados. I would like to see what they did. I do not know what would cause this, because you could only project ahead, based on the present. You cannot project based on your own gut feeling. The logical premise is that you use historical evidence to project. How is it that all of sudden there is a 5 per cent benchmark that the unions and the Government would use to come back to the bargaining table? On the basis of that, they would never get back to the

bargaining table. Therefore, we can expect no return to the bargaining table. Sir, again, that does not make sense.

House 15, sequence 13, 12:1014

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. C. A. MASCOLL:

We heard for the last six years in Barbados that we are going to have an economy driven by the private sector emphasising the foreign exchange earnings sectors and that we cannot afford to use old methods of inflation but we need to go the route of productivity enhanced competitiveness to drive us forward.

We have a building in George Street which looks very outstanding looking called the Barbados National Productivity Council, but I really wonder what it is achieving. I do not want to come down on the public sector workers but for the last several years we are being told that at some point we would be able to get or to use productivity base increases. We are saying now that we do not have an effective methodology, but yet in the absence of an effective methodology, we have something called public sector reform. Public sector reform is supposed to be the basis of the future. I would like to know what is public sector reform in the eyes of this Government. What do the Government really mean when they talk about public sector reform? The idea has been extremely pregnant for a long time, but it has not delivered. I do not know how much time we are going to take to get an effective methodology in place for productivity.

The Leader of Government Business comes now to the issue of regrading of the public service. Mr. Speaker, you do not have to wait for any regrading exercise to recognise that there are certain categories of public sector workers who are deserving of consideration as

we speak. Policemen and policewomen are deserving of consideration as we speak. It is simple. The society has become less predictable, less accommodating and particularly harsh. That is the reality of life in Barbados. Therefore, the job of the policeman has now to be reconsidered in light of the environment in which the policeman is now working.

Furthermore, the former Minister of Education who is now the Honourable Attorney-General said that only 30 per cent of all persons leaving school have any form of certification. That means that 70 per cent of all persons leaving school in Barbados do not get at least one CXC certificate. If that is so, and if you are requiring a policeman to have at least three CXCs certificates, it therefore means that a policeman is no longer a tall man with broad shoulders only, but that a policeman is actually expected to be part of those persons out of that 30 per cent who are being certified.

The thing about politics, Mr. Speaker, is that one does not have to get nasty in politics. One does not have to become ad hominem. One does not have to look to castigate any person, but can use the very information that is provided by the Government as a means of attacking the Government which is simple. It is not about personalities, it is not about shooting anyone, it is simply about using information. Therefore, on the basis of fact that policemen are required to have at least three CXC certificates, they are deserving immediately of consideration for regrading. There is no need for any other argument.

The other thing about this, and I made the point in the budget debate, is that we are not looking critically at what is happening in Barbados. There are more young males under the age of 25, it means therefore that there should be more males in secondary schools, but when you look at the results, the girls are

outperforming the boys. When you go on to university level, the enrollment there is at least 65 per cent female. It therefore means that males are under severe threat.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Where are the young men in Barbados going? I am saying that on that basis where you have a reduced quantity of young men becoming certified and a reduced number of young men going on to tertiary levels, it means that we are having an increasingly important individual called the policeman. On that basis therefore there is a need for regrading.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the teachers. If in this new global environment people are recognising the quality of our teachers, who are migrating to earn larger salaries to increase their standard of living, then almost overnight a teacher becomes a more valued person in the society. Therefore, we have to recognise the reality as well that a teacher is a more valued person in the society, and professionally he or she has to be ungraded. It is a fact of life.

Sir, let us look at our nurses. People all over the region, all in North America and even in the Far East are demanding our nurses. This means therefore that the skill of the nurse has now to be ungraded as well. It is very simple, Mr. Speaker. We are taking all kinds of signals from the outside world. We are almost living in conformity with the expectations of the World Trade Organisation, the Free Trade Area of the Americas and with globalisation, but we do not want to recognise that the greater resource which we have is our human resource. We do not have any big expanse of land. We do not have any major financial resources because if we had, we would have bought the Barbados National Bank, the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, the Caribbean Commercial Bank and others.

We have a falsity in the system which is talking about excess liquidity in the banking system, which says come and get, but when you go, you cannot get. Have we studied that situation in Barbados where a commercial banking system is saying that it is flooded with funds but yet still average Barbadians cannot get a loan? Mr. Speaker, there is an explanation for that, but it is not for me to provide, it is time that the Government side wake up and look to the reality of life in Barbados.

The Leader of Government Business talks about temporary posts being now made permanent. A lot of boast again.

House 15 Sequence 1412:20 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. C. A. MASCOLL:

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Leader of Government Business to say whether or not the Government has agreed to a principle of attrition in the public service. The International Monetary Fund(IMF) document states clearly, if it is well read, that wherever Government has a descending voice, it is explicitly stated. Therefore, on the question of freezing salaries of public sector workers, the Government said no, that it would not have been a good political decision. On the question of the hotels on the South Coast, the Government said no, that it would not have been a good political decision. However, when it was mentioned that attrition would have been used to reduce the size of the public sector wage bill, there was silence. Is this to suggest that Government is agreeing, in principle with the principle of attrition and, therefore, there is need?

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of Government Business went on to speak about casual workers not getting mortgages. Sir, even

permanent workers in the public service cannot get mortgages, even though there is supposed to be a flood of financing across the commercial banking system. It is a fact of life. I speak to people daily, who are saying that they would like to borrow small amounts of money but cannot get access. If mortgages were being made truly available, we would not be hearing so much discussion about the commercial banking system inviting persons in, nor about so much competition. If people were able to have access to these mortgages, then that would not be a problem.

Sir, how could a committee of public sector workers decide who would be upgraded in the public sector? We were told that there are over 3 000 persons who were recommended for an upgrade in the public sector. How could that be? A person cannot be upgraded, only a post. Therefore, if one policeman is going to be upgraded, it would mean that the entire Police Force would have to be upgraded and, therefore, as a recommendation, 3 000 persons cannot be upgraded. Mr. Speaker, posts for teachers, policemen, nurses, et cetera, can be upgraded and, therefore, it cannot be the case that a committee has recommended that 3 000 persons be upgraded.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of Government Business has talked about a training programme. Let me state here clearly that if one understands the future of life in the region, around the world, or of Barbados, then one must understand that there is an absolute need for retooling and retraining persons, especially in the public sector of Barbados.

It cannot be the case where one could, in fact, speak to a small training programme for public sector workers. It has to be a major exercise, and I am going to explain why. Mr. Speaker, if one has globalisation on one's doorstep, which is inviting one to become more competitive, it would mean that one has to become more

efficient and effective in what one does. If productivity is a means by which one becomes more efficient, then there is a need to upgrade the levels of productivity, first in the public service of Barbados, because the public service is supposed to facilitate the private sector. Therefore, there is a major need for retooling and retraining within the public service of Barbados.

In fact, that is what should have been the focus of Public Sector Reform. Public Sector Reform should be about retooling and positioning public sector workers to cope with this new global reality. Public Sector Reform is not about sending 3 000 persons per year to training. There is need for programmes within the public service, and there are 24 000 such workers.

Mr. Speaker, let me explain why there is the need. If one is going to compete in this new global reality and it is being suggested that people are not getting the kind of returns that they would have liked to see coming out of the educational system, and you are putting at least 2 000 persons who may have training in the computer technology per year in the job market, they would not be able to make the kind of quantum leap that is necessary to upgrade the labour force and to upgrade the economy, in order for it to compete effectively in a new global reality.

Mr. Speaker, the difference between today and in the 1960s, is that the focus in education should be on adult education, not that primary through to secondary, through to tertiary levels, are being forgotten but that the adult labour force has to be retrained to confront the new global reality. That is the only way for it to be done. Sir, two thousand persons coming into a labour force of 120 000, cannot transform the culture, the ethics, or the focus of the public sector or of the labour force as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we stated clearly the kinds of programmes that are necessary in our Manifesto. It is about changing the Social Partnership. The Social Partnership ought not to be concerned with salary increases only. In fact, the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) and the National Union of Public Workers, should be focused on how they are going to make a contribution within the Social Partnership, that redounds to the benefit of the wider cross-section of the public, that is the entire labour force, and not be concerned with only an increase in salaries from year to year.

Sir, therein lies the major challenge for the Social Partnership in Barbados. The National Union of Public Workers and the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB), need to come together and to see what the future holds for Barbados. Therefore, they have to make their determination as to the kind of contribution they intend to make in a Social Partnership, which has to be redefined in light of the new global environment. They cannot be concerned with whether or not there is a difference between the 2 per cent and 3 per cent.

Sir, in any case, even if the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) disagrees with the National Union of Public Workers, there cannot be any major difference in the agreement because the two unions would have been using the same kind of information. Therefore, there should not have been that focus in terms of where the unions in Barbados stand at this point in time. The focus has to be on how do we contribute to repositioning the labour force in light of the challenges that confront us ahead, and not to be simply concerned as to whether or not there should or should not be a 1 per cent more here or a 2 per cent more there. Sir, but I agree with the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados

(CTUSAB).

House No.15(15)12:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 9, 2003

SUSPENSION

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, without prejudice to the Honourable Member continuing his speech, it is now time for lunch. Sir, in moving the suspension for one hour from 1230 p.m to 130 p.m. and in that the Honourable Member has unlimited time, he can resume at that time. Hon. R.C. EASTMOND Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 130 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 1:30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

H15/12:30

Sequence 16

Thursday, December 16, 2003

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West will continue.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, we started this debate basically trying to suggest that the public sector workers in the last decade are not better off, when you look at the indicators of being better off in Barbados when

you look at the quality of life and the increase in salaries that they have had.

I want to put this into context by looking at a public sector worker during the period 1990 who would have been earning approximately \$2 500 per month or \$30 000 per year. I want to suggest that at that time when the cost of building and of land were lower, relative to now, a public sector worker earning \$30 000 per year would have had to look for approximately \$150 000 to build a three-bedroom/one bathroom home in Barbados. In today(s Barbados today, where that person(s income over the last several years might have increased to approximately \$40 000 per year, that same individual who wishes to own a similar type three-bedroom home in Barbados would have to look for approximately \$240 000 to purchase that same home.

Therefore, I am suggesting that when you compare, for example, a graduate teacher in the early 1990s with now, it would have taken about five times the annual salary of the teacher to purchase that home and land. In Barbados today, with an increase in salary it is going to take in excess of six times the annual salary of that person to purchase and own a similar type structure in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, there is an abundance of evidence to show that land which cost \$3 to \$4 per square foot ten years ago, now cost between \$12 and \$15 per square foot in several areas of Barbados, that is what I mean when I refer to not being better off. It is one thing to speak to increases in salaries but if the increases in salaries of public sector workers are simply going to mirror what is happening to inflation, all and sundry would agree, given the official retail price index and the fact that it has not, according to Government data, increased substantially, then the increases of public sector workers would not have been dramatic over the last ten years.

However, even given the inadequacies of the retail price index, because of its inability to cover services in the economy, when we look at the index for housing it has increased substantially. I also want it to be known that the index for housing did not adequately represent the increase cost of housing in Barbados, when you look at the retail price index.

Sir, I know that the carpenters and masons surveyed are not the ones who would have worked at Westmoreland but they are mainly workers of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, class A and B masons and carpenters. In no way would these workers reflect what has happened in the market. We are all aware that masons and carpenters would have enjoyed a fairly significant increase in their wages and salaries over the last ten years as a result of the building boom that we had on the west coast.

Mr. Speaker, at one stage in Barbados it was very difficult to get carpenters and masons during the high point of the construction sector, which has now been reduced. I think that we all know, and rightly so, that they were getting a wage and salary which represented a value within the market. The retail price index does not capture the impact of those wages and salaries on the cost of housing in Barbados because the survey does not adequately represent the market forces. Therefore, when you look at the information, it is woefully inadequate.

Sir, suffice it to say that most Barbadians would agree that the cost of land and building has significantly outstripped the increased wages and salaries of workers in Barbados. Those who want to refute that only have to do their research at the commercial banks or credit unions to recognise that persons in particular jobs, who might have previously qualified for mortgages to build comfortable homes, are

now not within the reach of the same kinds of houses that they were able to build ten years and as a consequence they are no better off than they were ten years ago.

Mr. Speaker, while we speak to that we also recognise that the Government is better off, by every indicator, in terms of government revenue, the individuals in the traditional private sector are better off but the emerging business sector in Barbados has undergone significant stress and will continue to experience difficult time in an era when there is the coming together of businesses to cope with the new challenges presented by trade liberalisation and globalisation.

It is fair by any indicator, to suggest that public sector workers have not enjoyed the benefits of so-called economic growth in the mid 1990s and beyond or that they have not been able to enjoy any substantial amount of the land that has become available because the high end of the market, even in construction, was the area of major activity as exemplified by the projects on the west coast of the island. Sir, when we look to evaluate public sector workers in Barbados we still must be concerned about their capacity to make advances in an economy that has not really seen it fit to allow them to enjoy any major benefits resulting from the so-called economic growth.

H14: 13.40Sequence 17

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

1:40 p.m.

Continuation of Mr. C.A. MASCOLL:

Mr. Speaker, I think we are quite clear on This Side that the increases being granted are not adequate for public sector workers. We are not the only ones saying that, the evidence is there to show that CTUSAB has disagreed in

principle. Earlier before lunch, I demonstrated why I think that CTUSAB has good grounds for wanting to have, in the last negotiation, a two-tier system of increases that would take account of the fact that low income earners are bearing a greater burden of the economic woes, than those in the higher income categories.

Sir, there is a definite need to reconsider an across-the-board increase in salaries for public sector workers at this point in time. This brings me now to this initiative to offer to Barbados two Deputy Prime Ministers and this is what we are seeing in this legislation as well. The former Deputy Prime Minister is now being designated as a senior minister of Government and would be able to get the perks of the Deputy Prime Minister position. Now, this is extremely difficult to understand. What made it more remarkable to understand is the fact that the Leader of Government Business was initially suggesting that the pay would not be retroactive. If indeed the pay would not be retroactive, it meant that the senior minister would only have become outstanding after the Honour that was bestowed on her.

Therefore, you have a situation where prior to the designation, the Minister would not have been deemed outstanding and would only start to receive a salary, commensurate with the Deputy Prime Minister(s) salary from hereon in, thus suggesting that outstanding service did not predate the designation. This would have been difficult to understand, but the thing is that we have now been corrected and we are being told that the perks would be retroactive.

Mr. Speaker, we know that in terms of the formation of the Government, according to the Constitution, only the Attorney-General and the Minister of Finance are required to be in the Lower House of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: The Attorney General ought to be seen as a senior Minister.

Sir, there is also no provision within our Constitution for the Deputy Prime Minister but yet still for convenience, we now have a situation in which there will be two deputy Prime Ministers of Barbados. This is very difficult to digest.

Asides.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: No one wants to deny any person.

There will be two deputy Prime Ministers. The fact that you have a senior minister who is going to receive the same pay with all the perks as a deputy Prime Minister means in actual fact that the individual is to be considered similar.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member Leader of the Opposition ought to know better than to mislead this House and to recognise that to so do is treated as a serious breach. There is no proposal before this Parliament for the designation of two Deputy Prime Ministers. The fact that we have accorded the terms and conditions of a senior Minister, a post well-recognised within the Commonwealth to which we belong, is not an intimation that a senior minister has the same responsibilities, same profile or anything to do with a Deputy Prime Minister. For the benefit of his own edification, he should recall that in most instances, the post of a senior minister is in fact reserved for former Prime Ministers, and in one or two other countries for former Deputy Prime Ministers.

It must not be allowed to remain as part of the record that this Government has brought before this Parliament, a position to create two posts of Deputy Prime Minister in this country. This

is not the case. It is misleading and it does no benefit the office of a person having the nomenclature of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, the very fact that the individual is going to get similar salary, similar allowance and every other such perks would mean...

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition also would have intimated about the post of Deputy Prime Minister in the Constitution of Barbados. The Barbados Constitution speaks to the Prime Minister and speaks to the Attorney-General.

Perhaps, the Honourable Member Leader of the Opposition ought to spend a little more time at the UWI, Cave Hill learning basic facts before coming in here to mislead, not only his own side, but the Parliament and the public of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, if I may correct the Leader of Government Business, the error I made was in relation to suggesting that the Attorney-General had to be a member of the Lower House when, in fact, it is the Minister of Finance. I always indicated that the position of Deputy Prime Minister is not within the Constitution of Barbados. While not being a lawyer, I have been able to read one or two books on constitutional law within Barbados, written by Justice Leroy Inniss, to update me and one or two others, so that I do not have to be a lawyer to speak on the issue.

Mr. Speaker, it is going to be very difficult to justify why we are making a senior minister of the recently appointed Dame and giving her the level of status of the Deputy Prime Minister of

Barbados. It is not a personal thing, but I am suggesting that we have to look down the road since this Government is adamant that the existing Westminster model will not be part of Barbados(landscape for too long.

Sir, when we move to a Republican style of Government, it may very well be the case that even though a person performs outstandingly, in the future, the person may not be designated our highest Honour. It does not mean that the person might not have made an outstanding contribution as a Minister of Government. On those grounds therefore, Mr. Speaker, it may be possible in the future to give such a designation to a person who, without the designation of Dame, would have performed outstandingly in Barbados and therefore there would be no harm in a previous or future Government appointing that person to a senior minister post. Sir, we have to be careful that we are not setting a precedent. Sir, this is not meant to be below the belt, but given the gravity of argument against the Westminster form of Government, and the pronouncements made about wanting to be a republic nation by the Other Side, I would have thought that several people in Barbados would have refused to be Honoured by the Queen.

House 15, sequence 18, 13:5016

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. C. A. MASCOLL:

It is simple. If someone feels so strongly about a system, why it is that they would accept to be called Sir or Dame under that system. That is an argument we can logically pursue. It is also worthy of serious discussion because I am of the view that although there are several people who speak against the system, they may very well prefer to be recognised as a Sir or a Dame than by whatever designation we may give them in a republican form of Government.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has been around long enough and he really ought to know better, but for his own edification, he is misleading the House. The Order of St. Andrew, whether it be appointed by way of a knighthood or the award of a Dame, is the highest order of Barbados and has nothing to do with any imperial order. The Leader of the Opposition is getting confused because he hears the words knighthood and Dame. That is just a titular thing. It is part of the laws of Barbados and is the highest order of Barbados. Therefore, the Leader of the Opposition has misled us when he suggested that there is a connection between that award and the state of being a republic. If he had really read Civics Barbados by Mr. Inniss, as he said he did, perhaps he would have had understood that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please, before you continue, I would just like to make an interjection here and give some advice. Of course I am not in a position to tell you what to say or what not to say. I believe that the appropriate time will come to discuss honours or who has been honoured, but I do not believe it is very gracious at this time to make the kind of insinuations that are being made. What you are speaking to is not a matter that is before the House, I just believe it is not very gracious at this time. I am not telling what to say or what not to say but I would prefer that you move on from that aspect of our presentation. Your speech has been high and above that, you know.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It may not be a case for contention. In trying to make the point, it may come out as if I am being less than gracious, so we can move on.

The point has to be made though that once you assign such remuneration and other perks to the individual, then you are seeing that

individual as on par with the Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados. That is the point that I want to make. I have already indicated to the individual that I was happy to see her elevation to such heights, so that is not a problem.

Having dealt with many of the issues raised by the Leader of Government Business, I want to put in perspective now why we should have had a better deal for the public sector workers. There are several conditions or factors that should inform a public sector wage negotiation. One is inflation from the past. I think it is time that the Government of Barbados advises the Statistical Department to revise the retail price index. That is necessary because it is compromising the wage increases of the workers in Barbados. The Government and private sector individuals are using the retail price index very skilfully to deny the workers their just increases in salaries.

Sir, what is fascinating is that in the period 1981 to 1982, when we experienced very high inflation in Barbados the same employers spoke out against the use of the inflation rate as a mean of justifying wage increases. Now that the retail price index is obviously underestimating the inflation rate, it is in the interest of the Government and private sector employers to skilfully use this indicator as the basis for justifying wage increases.

The other thing that impacts upon public sector workers would be income tax allowances and the marginal tax rate. I want it to be known that there is almost agreement that the interaction of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy is extremely far off. We have a single market but we are not going to have a single economy within the region. If that is so, then all the talk about harmonising and coordinating tax rates, property taxes and the like would have to be delayed. Sir, there is no way that I can see up ahead, I wish for better, a single economy coming into place.

The Prime Minister spoke to the question of marginal tax rates being reduced over time and justified it within the context of CARICOM, but I think we need now to revisit what this CARICOM experience is all about and what it really is within our experience and whether or not it is going to be achieved or be attainable. The evidence is clear that the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is very far away.

The question of comparable wages and salaries has to be used in public sector wage negotiations because we all know that the job market is becoming flexible and that job security is going to be very much in doubt over the next couple of years. Fortunately, it is impossible to remove a permanent worker within the public sector of Barbados. It cannot be done unless you turn around Lord Nelson again. Permanent workers are permanent in every sense of the word within the public sector of Barbados. If we accept that there is going to be a new job environment, which there obviously is, then there is going to be some time when we would have to recognise that a worker in the public sector who is doing a similar type job to those in the private sector may have to be considered for special treatment especially in areas of computer technology, marketing and other such areas that have emerged as extremely critical in the new global reality. If we are going to change the economy in which we are operating, to be able to compete with CARICOM, then we have to look at the kinds of indicators we are using to give increases to public sector workers in the not too distant future.

The other thing that is critical, which I demonstrated this morning, is the ability of the employer to pay. There is no doubt that given Government(s) recent attempts to reduce income taxes, that the Government is in a position to pay public sector workers. What Government has chosen to do is to spread the benefit

apparently across a wider cross-section of Barbadians by reducing income taxes.

House 15 Sequence 19

2:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. C. A. MASCOLL:

Mr. Speaker, I think the time has come for public sector workers to be recognised for what they have done over the last ten years, in terms of the sacrifices they have made. Therefore, I am suggesting that any available resources ought to be directed to public sector workers in Barbados.

This is something that I feel strongly about because in this new global era, one can no longer make a distinction between the private and the public sector. It is a question of what the individual is doing and the contribution the individual is making to the economy. Therefore, there is cause for us to see that there are several workers in the public sector who bring particular skills that have to be recognised and, therefore, have to be compensated in a new global environment.

Sir, the other issue is that whenever Government offers wage increases, let us remember that it has a unique position, that is, that Government is the only employer that gives an increase to its workers and could anticipate some measure of recovery by way of taxation. Therefore, in that sense, Government is a very unique employer because it could give a reduction in income taxes but could anticipate that they would benefit by way of, as in our case, the increase disposable income, bringing greater expenditure, more VAT and other taxes. Government is unique in that in reducing the level of income tax and increasing disposable income, that it would also get benefit by way of

VAT.

Mr. Speaker, in that regard, it means that the overall question of public sector wage negotiation, as I have already pointed out, needs to take a different approach, especially within the context of a Social Partnership. This is why I feel that the role of the Social Partnership has now to be revised in light of the fact that the emphasis no longer is on trying to adjust the public sector wage bill, trying to stop the dollar from being devalued, trying to restore growth in the economy, and trying to do a number of things. The focus has now to be on how do we now reposition Barbados to cope effectively with this new global economy and with the environment of trade liberalisation.

Sir, I have already said that one cannot continue to have an Incomes Protocol in place which is restricting the wages and salaries of workers, in an environment in which there has been a boom. It is well known that incomes policies are designed for crises and, therefore, given the apparent boom that we have experienced over the last nine years, there should not have been the kinds of restrictions on incomes that we have seen in Barbados over the last decade.

Sir, I have already argued that restriction in the disposable income of workers is, in fact, a reason that a number of small businesses have suffered during the last decade because, in real terms, the level of expenditure has been reduced and, therefore, the capacity to get revenue that they were previously getting, was restricted in an environment in which there was reduced disposable income.

Sir, I do believe when one looks to the supermarket sector, there is very ample evidence of the way in which competition has hampered the small black businessman, for example, Shamrock Supermarket, Ricks Supermarket, Julie(N Supermarket, et cetera.

Sir, one is seeing, in fact, that rather than the Barbados Shipping and Trading (BS&T) Groups of Companies getting out of this particular sector, they have now determined that the future of Barbados is, once again, going to be about buying and selling and not about manufacturing. They have also determined that they would do everything possible to become more involved in the retail and distribution sectors which, traditionally, have been their domain.

Mr. Speaker, that is a fact. Again it cannot be disputed when we recognise that when K-Mart Corporation might have been coming to Barbados, we saw the upheaval. What we saw then was that PriceSmart Corporation came and the Barbados Shipping and Trading (BS&T) Groups of Companies decided that they would build a supermarket in Warrens and would get a special bus service in order to facilitate their supermarket.

Therefore, suddenly the Barbados Shipping and Trading (BS&T) Groups of Companies is once again, even more a retail and distribution business, than manufacturing or any other kind of business in Barbados. They understand that in an open market, the real juice is going to come in retail and distribution, therefore, they have once again become a buying and selling community.

Sir, I have earlier explained what has happened to this Government when it did not allow Trinidadian investors to become involved in the Pine Hill Dairy but found it necessary to involve them and to continue to encourage them in purchasing the major financial and insurance sectors of Barbados. This is something that we definitely need to look at in the process of Public Sector Reform.

Mr. Speaker, I am, therefore, suggesting on the basis of all that I have said prior to lunch and post-lunch, that it is going to be very

difficult to justify why public sector workers in this environment should not have been granted better increases. It is also going to be very difficult to justify why there is not a two-tier system as is being suggested by the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) in wage negotiations in Barbados.

Sir, I want to impress upon Government that it is not the case that incomes tax reductions for beyond the threshold would benefit those below, and that the majority of workers in Barbados who earn less than \$1 600 per month, cannot benefit from any income tax reduction. If that is so, it means that one could logically conclude that the combination of the wage increases across the board, and the reduction in marginal taxes, would benefit public sector workers in the middle and high end, more so than those at the bottom.

Sir, I also wish to suggest that public sector wage negotiations present a signal for private sector wage negotiation, that is, there tend to lead in small developing economies, where the private sector takes it lead from what is happening within the public sector. Therefore, in instances where private sector individuals would be making substantial profits, they might use the fact that Government(s) negotiation has seen a settlement of only 8 per cent across a three-year period, as a basis for making a determination about their workers, in spite of the fact that they might have been making substantial profits. Sir, this is where Government has to be careful because to talk about economic enfranchisement and democracy, without giving workers the opportunity to be part of the process beyond simple increases, which is going to retard any such objectives.

Mr. Speaker, in light of that, therefore, I am suggesting that any time there is good within the economy, that public sector workers,

particularly after what they went through in the early 1990s, should be seen as part of that good and should be able to benefit substantially from it.

Sir, clearly there is no such thinking on the part of Government, with respect to trying to bring public sector workers back in line with the reality of life within the Barbados economy. Therefore, the gap between the workers might be widening.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that one needs to recognise is that there is some degree of flexibility in the capacity of private sector workers to earn, whereas a public sector worker is on a fixed salary. Therefore, if productivity measures are introduced for income increases within the private sector and the measures are working effectively, then the private sector worker(s) capacity to earn, would be dependent on that worker(s) work efforts and productivity. But if there is no such basis for productivity benefits within the public service of Barbados, then there would be the situation where, in this new environment, the public sector worker is still confined to a fixed salary. That has to be looked at as well.

House No.15(20)14:10 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. C.A. MASCOLL:

Mr. Speaker, I am therefore, saying that rather than have an army of occupation, as the public sector was referred to years ago, we have to get more innovative and think in terms of flexitime and allow public sector workers who do not have to serve the public immediately on their jobs upfront, to be able to organise their work schedule in such a way that we get more productivity out of these individuals. This can only happen if they are allowed to have more flexible times in terms of

work done as several public sector workers can stay at home and do their jobs just as effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I have experienced it during those difficult times when I worked as an economist for the Central Bank of Barbados and went to the Inland Revenue Department or Statistical Department. I would leave the bank where there were Pentium 486 computers and go to the Statistical Department where individuals used Pentium 286 computers at the time. Sir, a person may put a programme to run for trade data but because the computers were inadequate it took hours for that programme to finish so the individual could go down Broad Street for a lime. In actual fact, if the same programme was ran at the Central Bank of Barbados, it would be completed in no time because of the better technology.

In the Inland Revenue Department there was also competition among workers to see how much tape they would have at the end of the day to determine how productive they were when they used calculators. Sir, those processes at the time could have been done on a computer in less than no time but this happens across the board in the public sector. Sir, if we are serious about public sector reform it has to go beyond talk and it should have more to do with systems.

We have to allow public sector workers to become more involved in policy formulation. We cannot ask people to work daily in the Ministry of Agriculture or Ministry of Trade but when it comes to decision-making they simply have to accept policy from (on high) when they are the ones who best understand the processes involved in those Ministries. Sir, these are the kinds of things we have seen in Barbados over the years.

Sir, true public sector reform must involve a greater connection between the public sector

workers, the Ministers and the Government of the day and it is absolutely necessary that we put in place systems for true public sector reform to occur in Barbados as a means of carrying forward the process.

Sir, we can effectively argue that the economy of Barbados is currently in stalemate and that is why the Minister of Tourism would be happy to see arrivals increasing, even though he would admit that the average spending of tourists is down, because Barbados has become more dependant on the tourism sector than it was in the early 1990s.

The manufacturing sector cannot be said to be buoyant, in fact, it is the opposite. The international business sector that was supposed to be the engine of growth and create 2 000 new jobs per year over a five-year period is being challenged every day. The agriculture and sugar sectors are on their death beds, as has been admitted by the Prime Minister of Barbados. When we look at tourism, the international business sector, manufacturing sector, the agriculture and sugar sectors, the actual capacity to earn foreign exchange has diminished relative to seven years ago, that is a fact of life, Mr. Speaker.

The only way we can speak of public sector negotiations is if there is an economy because Government relies on the performance of the economy to derive its revenue which is then used to pay salaries, transfers and subsidies, interest on debt and goods and services at hospitals and other institutions. The overall state of the economy is paramount in any Government(s ability to perform and we must be in a position where we allow for effective use of the resources we currently have in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I have raised many concerns and I hope they would be recognised. I am also on record saying that one does not have to

speak for five or six hours to be effective.

This side has raised many issues in this debate. We are concern that public sector workers have not received better increases for the contributions made over the years and that Government has the ability to pay because Government is in a position where it can relieve income taxes and land and property taxes and it cannot say that it does not have the ability to pay. The first consideration in any public sector negotiation should be Government(s ability to pay and once that has been established we can consider how best to allocate those resources to public sector workers. If we accept that the lower end of the public sector wage scale is being disadvantaged, then it is important that any wage negotiation recognise that fact and allocate more resources toward the less fortunate workers within the public sector.

We must also recognise that public sector wage negotiations send a signal to the private sector and a caring Government must understand that lower income workers in Barbados will continue to be disadvantaged by employers and unions to some extent if the emphasis is not put on uplifting the lower end of the income scale.

If we also accept that a major input into wage negotiation is the retail price index and the ability to measure inflation, it is absolutely necessary for the Government of Barbados to recognise the need to restructure the Retail Price Index in the light of the fact that it does not cover services within the economy and, therefore, does not measure increases of services delivered to individuals, businesses and the Government within the economy.

H15/14:20

Sequence 21

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. C.A. MASCOLL
Government should put in place a refined, restructured index that gives a more adequate measure of the prices in Barbados.

We would also like to see a system of productivity being put in place. If we are going to emphasise a need for workers to be productive, then we must also be in a position to gauge and measure the contribution of the worker to the output of the public sector as well as the output within the private sector of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to conclude by saying that if we did a proper evaluation of the plight of the public sector worker in Barbados we would find that the worker is technically no better off than a decade ago. This is not intended to be a political statement. This is intended to respect and recognise what is happening in Barbados because a worker has to have expectation, goals and objectives. Once those goals and objectives are not being met, as is the case in Barbados, then there is a problem with respect to whether or not the economic growth that has been talked about is really redounding to the benefit of the average Barbadian in the society. There is no clear evidence that the average person in Barbados has been benefiting.

In fact, when you look at life in Barbados you would see that in every case of the economy the small business man is under pressure. It is happening in the retail industry, tourism, distribution, manufacturing, construction and the professional sector. Small people in Barbados have been disadvantaged over the last decade and that is a matter that has to be addressed.

Sir, what makes it more difficult is when you

look at the global reality, the coming together of businesses to get economies of scale and to become more competitive, it is clear to me that the future of small business is under threat in Barbados. The more we open up the market and the more we allow for free trade the greater the potential damage to small businesses across our economic landscape.

Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing in terms of Trinidadians buying into the commercial banking sector is not by accident. Trinidadians recognised since the 1980s that we have to extend our ability beyond the shores of Trinidad. We have to get involved in businesses across the OECS, LDCs in CARICOM and they embarked on a strategy to ensure that the market for their goods is secure and they did it by investing.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the trade balance between Trinidad and the OECS we would find that Trinidad is the major trading partner of the OECS countries. Since they recognise the potential of Barbados, they intend to get deeply in our financial sector which is the controlling arm of any economy. Any economy that does not rely on the financial sector is going to fail.

For example, if a Trinidad company sets up a business in Barbados, that Trinidad company has a head office in Port of Spain, it means that if that Trinidad company wants financial resources, it has the choice of going back to Port of Spain to seek financial resources or it can use its presence within our shores to get access to financial resources right here in Barbados.

A competing Barbadian firm in Barbados, does not have the privilege to go to Trinidad and raise resources of that kind. The competing firm is restricted to the Barbadian financial market and that is going to be so for a long time because we are not going to get, as we wish, the free flow of capital across the

region. Therefore, I am suggesting that we have to look at what the future holds and understand that it becomes a major challenge for our small businesses to compete in an environment where there is the presence of an emerging mega country across CARICOM.

Sir, the first thing that we need to recognise is that challenges will come from within CARICOM and once it is recognised that there are potential businesses within the region, then the external challenges will come as people seek to diversify their investment portfolios and reduce their risks by spreading their investments across the global economy.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish that we stop now to think about what the real future of Barbados is going to be like. I wish that we stop to see that this whole process is engulfed in a new paradigm that emphasises openness, free trade, competition, efficiency and productivity. Unless we are prepared to get onboard and to become involved in the process, we are going to be left behind and it explains the major reason why we have seen a substantial decay in the foreign exchange earners in Barbados, manufacturing and agriculture. The only surviving foreign exchange earner is tourism.

I wish the Minister well because our future depends on the capacity of tourism to carry us, even more so than before. When I speak about our going forward in reverse, I hope that it is understood what I am referring to. Sir, even though we are supposed to be growing and developing we are becoming more fragile and less stable. We are not as comfortable as we were in the 1980s because we were resting on our many more pillows.

Sir, Trinidadians once came to Barbados to shop but we now go to Trinidad to shop. We had a manufacturing sector that was export, Intel, CDS and other but we do not have those luxuries anymore. Therefore, I am suggesting

that this debate is wider, it is about what the future holds and in the debate the public sector is the most critical component of a new Barbados, CARICOM and a new world.

We must understand that the public sector is really at the centre of this new global reality. Globalisation is the interaction of economies, technologies and cultures but the real underlying threat of globalisation is what constitutes the optimal size of the public sector because all the basic tenets of globalisation come back to the issue of sovereignty, the capacity of small states to govern in the new global environment.

Sir, the contradiction is that globalisation requires efficiency and the public sector is at variance with efficiency so a smaller public sector is consistent with efficiency. Therefore, when you reduce globalisation to its real important issue, it is about what is the optimal size of government. Sir, that is at variance with the democratic, socialist principle that we practise within the region, therefore, the concern is about governance. What is the size of the public sector that we can sustain in the new global reality? It then has all kinds of implications for how we govern, not only locally but within CARICOM; the capacity of countries within CARICOM to give up some of their sovereignty, and that is what is required.

H15: 14.30 p.m.

Sequence 22

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

2:30 p.m.

Continuation of Mr. C.A. MASCOLL:

Therefore, public sector reform is the sine qua non for enhancing efficiency and being more competitive in a new global economy. If

you can reduce the gap between the private and public sector, in relation to efficiency, then you are on the road to becoming more competitive.

If the countries in the region are to come together as one, then that issue has to be multiplied across CARICOM in every country. Therefore, the real challenge for the future is what will be the optimal size of the Government in the future of CARICOM.

Should we privatise more?

Should we get out of certain operations?

Should we contract out?

Should we downsize?

Should the Government be less of a player in the economy?

These are the real issues that we have to confront ourselves with, therefore, when I say that they are the real issues, I am very serious.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is that when you begin to wax this way in your speech, you are told that you are being esoteric and you are being academic. I well recall hearing those words, not recognising that the real issue is at the heart of public sector reform, and public sector reform is at the heart of human capital development, so human capital development is really the issue for CARICOM states, and Barbados is no less.

We need therefore to revise and regrade certain categories of workers, such as policemen, nurses, teachers and those who are delivering services. Again, if you are going to emphasize that services will be your bread and butter in the future, then:

You must understand that policemen provide a service.

You must understand that nurses provide a service.

You must understand that teachers provide a service.

It is most important that those services should not be restricted to the geographical location of Barbados and sooner, rather than later those kinds of professions will be able to ply their trade throughout the CARICOM region. It is in that context therefore, Mr. Speaker, that I repeat, public sector reform is critical.

Asides.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Do not mind the doc. The doc does not engage in anything that is serious or academic. He lives on the periphery. He is just about the cosmetic.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that this is very important.

Sir, let me end by saying that any public sector wage negotiation ought to be seen within the context, not just of providing salary increases, but within the context of repositioning the public sector, and understanding its importance and relevance to a future economy and a future Caribbean.

Unless we appreciate those issues, Mr. Speaker, we are going to struggle. Unless we understand that a social partnership should not be now confined to silly matters but be more focussed on the real issues and should not now be divided on a matter of 1 per cent or 2 per cent, but should really be concerned about human capital development, then we are not going to appreciate what the future is really all about.

Therefore, my call is simple. We cannot accept this level of increase for public sector

workers, given the circumstances prevailing within the economy and beyond, but we are calling on those involved to get more involved in the real issues that currently confront the Barbados reality.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. A.P. Wood: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make my contribution in what I consider to be a very important debate. Any matter pertaining to the terms and conditions of workers is to be taken as extremely serious. I sat there, especially towards the end, and listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael making some fairly important points. It is a pity that he did not spend more time in his discourse to expound on those issues which are pertinent to the debate, but are not the type of issues that each and everyone would want to stand and discuss in detail.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, sometimes when I listen to the Opposition, I try to determine the lines of consistency. I am going to explain. Sir, not very long ago, the Prime Minister came into this Honourable Chamber and delivered his Economic Statement. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West for the better part of a 3(hour reply, sought to paint a picture of this economy(s prospects as one of gloom and doom.

I am going to put this in the context of first principle so as to make the point. You cannot be on the one hand, and not very long ago, in this Honourable Chamber and have nothing good to say about the economic performance of this small economy since 1994, notwithstanding what the out-turn figures were per output.

In the last nine years, we were led to believe that the workers in this country were worse off since 1994, and there is nothing good around the corner for this economy. Sir, just a couple

days after, I am hearing from the same Honourable Member for St. Michael North West that in terms of ability to pay over a sustained period, that all is not well with this economy and he cannot support a negotiated settlement which the Union that is responsible for the majority of workers has no difficulty with, whatsoever, and we are talking about a negotiated position.

Sir, this is why I say that when I listen to the Opposition I look for threads of consistency. Sir, you will never believe that the Leader of the Opposition was the same person who replied to the Budget and sought to give the impression that this economy is not well poised to take off. If that were the case, you cannot come back a week or two later and say you cannot support an 8 per cent increase, when the NUPW, the Union which is responsible for the majority of workers that we are talking about, says that it is something that they could live with on behalf of their workers.

House 17, sequence 23, 14:4014

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

I want to start at that point and I want to expose the Leader of the Opposition for exactly what he is in this regard. I have a duty to the people of this country to do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West knows very well that when folks sit to determine a settlement on wages that one of the economic indicators which they go to the table eager to use in the discussion is the inflation rate. When I checked the figures, I look to determine if they have been any erosion in the purchasing power and if the movement in wages were outstripped by the movement in the price level. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been presented

with information which tells me that since 1995 to 2002-2003, wages increases in the public sector have outstripped inflation over the period 1995-1996 to 2002-2003 by 10.7 percentage point at the bottom at the salary scale and 9.73 percentage points at the top.

When we come to discuss this matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should not try to get so emotional over it, we should be honest with ourselves and we should look at the position the economy is in. Also when we seek to determine the Government(s ability to sustain increase wages to civil servants over time, we should look at the position the economy is in, where it is we want to take the economy, how we intend to get it there and how we would want the civil servants to help facilitate the process.

That is why I said that the issues the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West addressed towards the end of his presentation in a summary form are the issues that should have been amplified on and that should have served the basis for his contribution. I am serious about that. What he should have told us is what else the Government would have done since 1994 and certainly in more recent times in respect of other allowances and what the Government would have done in respect of securing people(s employment, those who were casual workers and temporary officers previously, because that counts for a lot. A fellow would like to know that he is no longer trust or kept in the days of yesteryear not so very long ago under the Democratic Labour Party administration when today would have been his last or tomorrow could be his last and he is functioning with uncertainty, have an unsettled mind, disrupting his family and disallowing him to commit to certain investments thereby denying him the opportunity to lead a fairly comfortable life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this administration put an end to that uncertainty in respect of employment. You know very well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that since 1998 over 4 000 casual workers were converted into public officers. That is security of tenure. That allows these public servants the opportunity to function in a more settled environment and to commit to certain investments.

What the Leader of the Opposition should also tell us, which of course he did not fail to because it does not suit his cause to do that, is what would be the cost of these increases on the Consolidated Fund. What he should have also tell us is what is the cost of the other things the Government did by way of tax reform and the cost of what the Government intends to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would have announced a number of tax reform initiatives which would be implemented some of which started on January 1, 2003, others to be started on January 1, 2004 and others still that would start on January 1, 2005. The things to which I speak are as follows. From January 1, 2003, the basic rate levied on a taxable income of \$24 000 or less was reduced from 25 per cent to 22.5 per cent. From January 1, 2004, this basic rate will be reduced further to 20 per cent and the threshold on which tax is paid would move from \$15 000 to \$17 500. From January 1, 2005 the taxable threshold would be \$20 000 and the marginal tax rate of 40 per cent would be reduced to 37.5 per cent.

I admit, just as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West did, that adjustments to the marginal tax rate would not affect those who do not pay taxes which is fairly obvious. The fact of the matter is that these reform initiatives will have some cost to the Government. These measures will have a negative impact on Government(s revenue in the neighbourhood of \$54 million in this

financial year and \$73 million in 2004-2005. This is information that was placed on the table when the negotiations took place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the negotiated settlement, the one the National Union of Public Workers(agrees with, would cost the Government in 2003-2004, \$16.9 million, in 2004-2005, \$26.3 million and it is estimated to be \$26.6 million in 2005-2006. When we put those two sets of figures together, the cost to the Treasury of the negotiated settlement and the cost of the tax reform initiatives... I want to put this thing in proper context because I am getting sick and tired of coming into this Honourable House - thanks to the good folks of St. Philip South - because when I come here I cannot engage in debates which are contributed to by persons from the other side who are making contributions that are not based on facts or on clear thoughts because they are still stuck in an election mode. They have to understand that what might be reasonable for a political platform where one can get up and talk a lot of foolishness as some Honourable Members on that side are renowned for doing, that when they come into this Honourable Chamber, we expect a certain level of scholarship, a certain level of debate to take place and we expect persons to speak from a position of analytical competence. If they cannot do that, they should shut their mouths and listen to persons who are well prepared when they come into this Chamber. That is what they should do.

House 15 Sequence 24

2:50 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Sir, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West can do better but he is driven on by the Opposition(s behavior on how

they should behave. If the Honourable Member is going to come to Parliament and tell us about one(s appeal to the principle to pay, the sustainability of those payments over an extended period or to the delicate nature of the position of this economy and does not make contact with statements that would have been previously made, if these things do not mean anything to some person who wants to engage in a serious discussion, as to whether or not the Government could afford in excess of the 8 per cent over the three years, then something is fundamentally wrong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a number of weeks ago, we were treated to a debate in this Chamber at which much was said, and there were some very rich contributions from this side. Sir, we heard what this economy would have to confront today, tomorrow and certainly into the future. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were very calculating in respect of how the economic proposals were fashioned. We said that this administration, while recognising the need to put some particular emphasis on tourism, immediately after the September 11th, 2001, events.

We also said that in order for us to achieve the type of macro economic performance which is required for us to maintain a reasonable standard of living, while allowing us to continue to provide a better quality of life for our people, that we needed to pursue a balance-growth strategy. Sir, by that I mean that no longer can the Government afford to put so much emphasis on tourism and but at the same time we recognised that the challenges being faced by this economy, we should seek to facilitate a revitalisation of the other sectors. Therefore, we had a full package for agriculture, international financial service, manufacturing, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, you would well remember that in that debate, the Opposition Member for St.

Philip West especially, along with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, had sought to give the impression that things were so bad that the economy was crumbling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the economy was crumbling, one could not expect the administration to bear massive costs of wages increase.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, we are very careful. We said that the economy had taken a dip in 2000-2001, in 2001-2002, there was then a leveling off of the performance. This year we are coming out of it and the economy is being restored to growth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, notwithstanding what would have been said about the Barbados Central Bank, which would have played a very important role in the negotiation settlements, and this is why we need to be careful. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was part of a team back in the early 1990s that, against all proper advice rendered by the senior officials of the Barbados Central Bank had practised fiscal imprudence in recklessness and had decided that they would have gone against such advice. Sir, but those of us who sat at the table have decided that we would have accepted the advice rendered by the Barbados Central Bank when they were discussing the wage increase.

Sir, during the negotiations, the Barbados Central Bank was invited to outline its perspectives on the state of the economy and, at the time, argued that while the economy had come out of a recession and was poised to grow at an annualised rate of more than 2 per cent, the recovery could not have been described as being strong.

Sir, obviously it could not have been described as being strong for those reasons that I have just advanced in this presentation. It could not have been described as strong because it was being led by particular sectors. We said that part of our macro economic strategy was to seek to pursue a balance-growth strategy.

Sir, it could have only been determined that our economic performance was strong when all the sectors and strategic industries therein were functioning very strongly. We are saying that as long as we could have gotten the manufacturing and agriculture sectors going again, then the performance could have been considered as being strong.

Sir, it cannot be considered as being strong if it was done in an unbalanced way and, therefore, what we are seeking to do, is to make the growth that we want to achieve in this economy in a balanced way.

Sir, chances are that in the future when that has been achieved and we go back to the negotiating table with a strong economy, one that is characterised by a strong performance in all of the sectors, then the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, who should have known better, might have some case for there to be an increase of an order that exceeds what is here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am submitting, just as the Leader of the National Union of Public Workers would have recognised that the state of economic affairs at this point in time could have supported these increases and not the type that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would have been imagining.

Sir, all the Honourable Member has said was that he would not support this Resolution but has not said what he would support. The Honourable Member has never given a figure

as to how much they would be willing to give this year, in 2004-2005, or in 2005-2006, instead, it suits him fine to come to Parliament and to say that he would not be supporting these figures.

Sir, we know what these figures would cost the Government. We know the background against which the Government(s) proposals were put on the table and were negotiated, while giving and taking all along. But the Honourable Member could come to Parliament and without any facts or basis whatsoever, could say that he is not supporting these figures.

The Honourable Member has mentioned the ability to pay principle now and sustained - and I can strike down the argument on the ability to pay principle, based on the state of affairs now, and on what was entered in the last debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Central Bank has urged the parties to recognise the need to reduce Government(s) fiscal deficit and has pointed out that failure to do so could have devastating consequences, for example, a lowering of Barbados(credit rating, higher interest on foreign loans, a reduced confidence in the Barbados dollar, a reduction in Government service, and an increase in taxes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you are a politician. What I have just read here, does it not sound familiar? Does it not sound as though we are talking about a Barbados economy back in the early 1990s?

House No.15(25)3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. A.P. WOOD:

All of these things were characteristic of the Barbados economy in the bad years of the early

1990s under the charge of the Democratic Labour Party. The Government took this into consideration, common sense prevailed on the part of the National Union of Public Workers, they accepted it based on the ability to pay principal now and over the period of the negotiated settlement since it was what the economy could afford. Sir, we must give Joseph Goddard credit for this.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West never said what percentages the Democratic Labour Party would support. He constantly says that the Opposition would not support the matter but we do not know his definitive position.

Sir, given the persuasive argument put by the Government, the National Union of Public Workers who originally rejected the three-year proposals accepted it and agreed that 8 per cent increase would be a fair deal for public workers but the Opposition spokesman, without giving us a definitive position is not agreeing with that amount.

Mr. Speaker, I have said previously that if Honourable Members cannot speak from an authoritative position in this Chamber, use statistics nor understand the basis concepts pertinent to certain debate, until such time, they should shut up.

Sir, this Government would never be responsible for a slash in civil servants(salary. We also said we would want persons to go to work without uncertainty and insecurity about their jobs so we turned the casual workers into public officers. In addition to that, over 1 000 temporary posts have been established to allow them to be appointed. Sir, these things must be said because we cannot engage in a serious debate on terms and conditions of workers without looking at the total picture and if it is not in the interest of the Opposition to do it, the Government will have to do it.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South were ordered to be expunged from the record by MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I withdraw the statement. We gave back the eight percent that the Democratic Labour Party cruelly took for the workers and it caused this Government a lot of money to restore it but we were committed and we did it. Now, they speak about the salaries for the same civil servants they unfaired but no one is making contact with that issue and I will not allow them to get away with it.

A few weeks ago, we outlined the economic programme for Barbados and we said that all hands would be needed on board inclusive of those who function in the civil service. We recognise that there are bottlenecks at the level of implementation but a programme, no matter how cleverly it is designed, is only as good as it is implemented. I will say the same thing again today, Sir.

Sir, civil servants should recognise they have an important role to play in helping us to achieve effective implementation. The Government needs to pay attention to how relationships are established, to the training of officer in order to introduce more flexibility and to seek to establish better relationship between public sector workers and the private sector with a view to getting them to work in a more efficient way. This is important in the context of having to compete in a changing regional and hemispheric economy and in a fiercely competitive international economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing I want to say that civil servants must also recognise that they have an important role to play, that this is the time for policymakers, Opposition members, politicians and the private sector to run this

country in the way that meets the approval of all sectors. We need everyone to understand that economic development is not the responsibility of the ruling administration only, that it is a national endeavour and everyone must be prepared to make their contribution at some level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, development does not begin with the politician. It begins in the hearts and minds of everyone in this country who wants to take charge of his or her own destiny.

H15/15:10Sequence 26

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. A.P. WOOD Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want all Honourable Members who contribute to this debate to do so in a forthright manner and by the most skillful use of the facts and to be honest with themselves and to appeal to their conscience when they make statements. I also want them to understand that development is a national enterprise and that the civil servants have a very important role to play in order that certain industries and sectors of the economy go forward on a balanced growth path. Sir, we should all, at the appropriate time, seek to commend all those who have contributed to the negotiations so that the settlement becomes one that is acceptable to all based on what the economy can afford at this time.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in this debate but I have said that I will not be supporting any tokenism to the civil servants of Barbados at a time when the Government can to find substantial increases for its members. I believe that if we are going to have an approach, it must be a fair approach for all and it should not be an approach where Government could find appropriate increases

for its members and not for the total civil service.

Asides

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is suggesting that the increases are higher for the Honourable Members on this side than there are for the civil service. Sir, this is not true and the Honourable Member should withdraw that statement.

Asides

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: It cannot be recorded that Government is giving its members an increase that is higher increase than the normal civil servants. He has to withdraw that statement, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy SPEAKER: Could you withdraw that statement, please?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am about to make a statement and it is regrettable that the Honourable Member did not wait for me to complete what I was saying.

Asides

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a situation where we now find ourselves with a Parliament of thirty members and we have twenty members who are being paid as if they are ministers. We have fourteen on the frontbench, three elsewhere and three regarded as Parliamentary Secretaries.

Sir, there was a time when we looked at the Order Paper and we saw the calculation of salaries, the Minister(s salary was first and the next highest salary was the Speaker of the House. Sir, all of a sudden the Speaker(s position has been downgraded and Parliamentary Secretaries(salaries are

upgraded over the salary of the Speaker of House. Sir, when we look at it from the point of view of pay and not of position the Parliamentary Secretaries can now be easily be regarded as junior ministers.

Sir, a few years ago a Parliamentary Secretary(s salary was approximately sixty thousand dollars a year and it now \$97 000 a year, almost a 50 per cent increase. It has nothing to do with duties because they were Honourable Members on the backbench who were capable and were making representation that they should have been ministers. The Government decided that in order to keep them quiet, it would increase their salaries and put their positions closer to that of ministers.

Rev.J.J.S. ATHERLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is only one Parliamentary Secretary that sits on the backbench and that Parliamentary Secretary never made representation in the way that it is indicated.

Asides

Rev.J.J.S. ATHERLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the Honourable Member should be invited to withdraw the words, on the backbench. It is certainly inaccurate and untrue.

Asides

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I withdraw the words backbench.

I am saying that it is wrong to describe them any longer as Parliamentarians Secretaries and if you are going to change their names, they should be referred to as junior ministers. Sir, when you look at the salaries you have to ask the question how the Honourable Member for Christ Church East could be working so hard and be satisfied getting \$3 000 more than his

Parliamentary Secretary. The Honourable Member is sitting on the front -bench with a salary that is only \$3 000 more than his Parliamentary Secretary.

Asides

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am not saying that the Parliamentary Secretary does not work hard and do not think that I am personally attacking the Honourable Member. I want the Honourable Member to understand that the reclassification in pay has nothing to do with work that was to keep the members on the backbench quiet. Sir, the Government understands that when you get angry and you preach a sermon, it is not an easy one. That was a very damaging sermon, that you preached on morality.

Asides

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: You said that whenever they bring that legislation you will deal with it.

Asides

Rev.J.J.S. ATHERLEY: On a point of order. I think that essentially the Honourable Member is making the statement that he was previously asked to withdraw. In addition, the Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House to indicate that I made a statement in this Chamber with reference to morality because it had have anything to do with the increase of pay for public servants.

Asides

Mr. Deputy SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I were to call the figure of \$115 533.36 and I ask you to which job position would you assign that figure, what would you

tell me, Sir?

Asides

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I know that you cannot answer that question but I know that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would tell me that is the pay for a Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is reading from a document and he should make it a document of this Honourable House.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that figure comes from a document of this Honourable House. I know that you are not going to request that I make the document, to which I am referring to a document of this Honourable House when it is already a document of the House.

Asides

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James North tells me that these figures are to be divided between two Deputy Prime Ministers and I want to thank him for that.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would be wrong for the Honourable Member to conclude that I said anything about two Deputy Prime Ministers.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I want to make the point that it is the right of the Barbados Labour Party, if they want to have two Deputy Prime Ministers, to have two. Sir, nobody can stop them.

H15 15.20 p.m.Sequence 27

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

3:30 p.m.

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

I do not have a problem, if they come to this Parliament and say they want two Deputy Prime Ministers, but I have a problem when you can allocate two salaries for the same position and create another position.

You cannot, Sir, allocate two salaries for the Commissioner of Police and give another description for somebody under the Commissioner of Police. I am saying that I have no problem, if the Honourable Member for the City wants...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, when I pick up this document, normally when I see \$115 533 36, I know that is the salary of the Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados, but what I have a problem when I turn now, and see a senior minister with the same amount. I cannot understand. If you are telling me that a deputy Prime Minister is higher than a senior Minister, then the pay would have to be different. If you are telling me that the salaries are equal, then the positions must be equal.

I do not have a problem in that we do not have to change the Constitution to get two deputies. I am saying to go right ahead and name two deputies and do not talk about a senior minister. In other jurisdictions, when you speak about a senior minister, it does not mean a change in pay. It is just a name. I am challenging the Government to bring...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is telling me that a senior minister gets the same pay as a normal minister and for his

knowledge. I would like the Honourable Member to know that other Ministers would get \$101 934 72 in salary while the senior Minister would now get \$115 533 36. It is clear to me that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South was not in Cabinet at the time when this was discussed or it has not been discussed in Cabinet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot discuss this before I have a word for the unions of Barbados. We cannot be using inflation as the basis for salary increases any more for the simple reasons that if we are going to use inflation for the workers, we have to use inflation for the private sector and the Government of Barbados. If one looks at the statement of current revenue from 1994 to 2003, one would recognise, Sir, that based on inflation, Government revenue would not have increased at the rate it increased.

Sir, you would be surprised that the Government's revenue has been able to increase by 76.6 per cent, when the workers have only been able to see between 25 per cent and 30 per cent within that same period. What is even more distasteful is that the private sector in this country has been able to increase its revenue by 95 per cent and the workers could not even see 30 per cent. Do you know what is wrong about that? Sir, it is that we had a tripartite relationship.

This means that the engines which drove the economy were not able to have the same relationship as the private sector but they are telling me that they are in bed, and that they have a relationship, and that the workers, the Government and the private sector should come together and build the economy. If you want all three to come together and build the economy, you have to build the relationship.

I am saying to the unions that I am watching a dance being played out there, like hopscotch.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: My turn now, and yours the next time.

Sir, I watch these things very carefully. Last time, it was CTUSAB, now it is NUPW, next time, you can (bet your bottom dollar) it is going to be CTUSAB to settle first.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Every other negotiation, as if they are playing games with the workers.

Sir, it worries me because when the country was in crisis, those same unions marched up and down this country, and when the Government did not have the foreign reserves or the revenue to pay, the same unions bought out their workers.

Sir, when you look at Table 14, of the Estimates for every year, you could see increases in revenues for the Government and the unions were sleeping.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: They are telling me to tighten my belt, because that is the call of Government. When the country was sick, they were marching as if they wanted the country in the grave faster.

I am telling you, they have to understand that they have a duty call. The workers of Barbados want to have increase disposable income to buy some of the companies which are being sold in Barbados, if not, Sir, you would have a situation where the workers would have pulled around the country and the people from outside are buying up everything.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, you purchase with disposable income. Sir, what is worse, is that when January 1st 2004 comes, the workers who can least afford the impact, would have some impact on their backs.

Sir, I want to see the workers at the bottom getting some money, and if the Government cannot do it by giving them increased salaries, they have something very good called, the reverse tax credit, which I would like to see increased.

I am also saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I want this same Government to understand that they are even unfairing the pensioners, with this 1.3 per cent, 2 per cent and all that foolishness. The excuse they are giving the pensioners is that they gave them a tax break, so they have to reduce the amounts of increases they are giving them. What madness is that, when those pensioners do not get the reverse tax credit.

I once called for the reverse tax credit for pensioners, and I am calling for it now, because that pensioners (pay has to purchase goods, and they have the same impact of VAT on their goods. I am telling the pensioners that the Honourable Members on the backbench and all the others, except the one from St. Thomas, seem not to have a problem with my argument. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas is against my call for increases for the pensioners.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have not yet made a contribution to this debate and, therefore, I would like to have that remark withdrawn from the record. I shall speak in my time. What the Honourable Member should have made clear to the House, is whether or not he raised the salaries of his workers at Moontown.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I will answer that when this debate gets personal, if you want to make it personal, but that is platform talk.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that nothing will be able to change me from where I am going. I am saying that we must understand in here, the allocation for workers by Government. There is clear evidence that the Government does not have to worry about the impact of what is going on in the world because of its revenue.

House 16, sequence 28, 15:3014

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

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

Sir, it is clear that the Value Added Tax (VAT) was introduced wrongly. The VAT was introduced to look after the interest of large businesses to such an extent that they are now behaving like small businesses. The Barbados Labour Party made a charge against the Democratic Labour Party about price controls, but soon from now the VAT is going to be more damaging on small businesses than the price controls were. That is all I would say on the matter.

The Government said to Barbadians that they were not going to cut the salaries of civil servants again, so instead of cutting the salaries of public servants they made sure not to give them adequate increases so that they would not increase their wage bill. To keep their promise about not cutting the salaries, they have kept the wage bill at a particular level so that they would not have a problem.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North understands full

well the impact of the new rates coming from the telephone company that they have set on the poor people of this country. The poor people have to pay for any repairs to their telephone. I heard that from the mouth of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The unions should have negotiated for the increases based on the agreement signed by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and Cable and Wireless because previously Barbadians never had to pay for repairs to their telephones, for their telephones or pay as they use their telephones. I must admire the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. He remembers well the debate in here and he probably told himself he will not commit political suicide, so he jumped off quickly before it carried him along with the others.

It is clear that the Government has been able to cater to a particular group, the ones at the top, and is not interested in the masses of people in Barbados. We have to understand the impact that is coming on the masses is great because when one looks at the allocation of the amount of money in savings in the banks, one would recognise that it is not there from the poor people of Barbados, but it is there from a (two few(. That (two few(group seems not to have an interest in reinvesting that money and what we are having is a group that is coming from outside and is absorbing all of the investments. The people of Barbados do not have disposable income to absorb the investments in the country. They cannot do it with land either because they do not have any money to buy the land and what is regarded as a low income house in Barbados is really something for the upper middle income.

I am saying, Sir, that this Government has a commitment to the masses of people in

Barbados because they voted for them and they cannot only look after the interest of the (two few). If this economy is to go forward, then we have to empower the civil servants by giving them more disposable income to create a better economic climate in the country. As long as they continue to put the money at the top, the multiplying effect will not be the same. The multiplying effect impacts at the bottom more so than at the top. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South would not dispute that because he should understand that particular point.

The reason this economy is not performing the way it should, is that we have put all the money to the top and we have ignored the bottom. Therefore, the unions must tell the public of Barbados what role they had in that. If we had some money at the bottom, you would have seen some expansion within the economy because if you give a rich man a million dollars tomorrow it will not be felt at the bottom but if you give a poor man a million dollars every single soul in Barbados would feel the impact. The Government needs to be told that once the masses get money it would impact from the bottom to the top, but once the top gets all the money, it goes into savings. That is why we have over two billion dollars in savings. We want to see the civil servants having an impact on that too. We want to hear them say this is their share of the two billion dollars. They are asked to work hard, but they are not being compensated for doing so.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am saying to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need to get some money in the hands of the policemen and all the other civil servants in Barbados because they are working hard to generate the growth in Barbados but they are not being compensated.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I will not support this Resolution. I do not back down on my words. The same statement I made in the budget address I am making now. I am consistent in my argument and I will continue to be consistent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to understand what is happening. We cannot allow people to bring the Cave Hill talk, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, is here looking after the interest at the top and ignoring those at the bottom. We must understand that the top is talk for poor people but cash is not talk for poor people. Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to send to the public of Barbados that persons like myself from very humble beginnings are not concerned about those at the lower end of the economic strata. The records will have to reflect that persons of my upbringing and my standing is pretty much with the poor and fully so with those who are not so well-off in this society.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to make the point that between the period 1999 to 2003 there were two members of the Opposition and we did not complain even though we had to do all the work for the Opposition at the time. Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though we were only two and there was a justifiable case for a deputy leader of the Opposition to be compensated for the additional duties, we never complained.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I could never complain at that time, it would have fallen on my plate. I made a vow after 2003, that in the same way that the Government can get two deputy prime ministers and a prime minister, that the Opposition should be entitled to

appoint someone as a paid deputy leader of the Opposition.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I did not speak about it then, because at that time I had an interest in it and I did not put a case because I do not put a case for myself. I am saying, now that the Government has come and asked for two deputy prime ministers, that the Opposition has a right to put a case for a paid deputy leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as far as I am aware and as far as the document expresses, there is only one deputy prime minister and a senior minister and not two deputy prime ministers as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is clearly indicating to mislead this House, so I wish to have that remark withdrawn, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you withdraw that comment or rephrase it, please?

House 15 Sequence 293:40 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me rephrase it. I am saying that in the same way there are two salaries of the same quantum, the Leader of the Opposition should be able to have a senior member, not necessarily by age, by the number of years in Parliament or by status, and that entitlement should also go to the Opposition in terms of fairness. It should also have been done especially at a time when there were only two Members of the Opposition but seeing that it was the Honourable Member for St. Lucy at that time, I would not put a case for that time

but would put one for now.

Sir, if the demand on Government is great, the demand on the Opposition has to be greater because each Honourable Member of Cabinet has a Parliamentary Secretary, many advisors, et cetera, and the Opposition needs to make sure that the same status is accorded to them.

Sir, people could talk but to find out the position of a person, I look at the salary that is being paid to that individual and not necessarily the name. Sir, when I look at the salary and it looks like a particular person, then in my mind that is what I am seeing. If there are persons who have objections to that, then that is up to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have also raised another issue in Parliament. In 1994 when the Government came to power, they said that they needed to keep the Civil Service at a particular size. What we are seeing is a change in that. I have before said it and I need now to repeat it. What I am now saying is that the limit for pensionable service should be moved from 10 years so that those persons who want to leave the service could leave early, so that they would not impact on the performance of the civil service by having an interest elsewhere. Those persons who would want to work elsewhere are forced to remain in the system because of the 10-year limit.

Sir, I think this might be a good way for Government to reflect on their 1994 decision and to understand what they were saying at that point in time. I think that Government should put this provision in, so that workers could freely leave the Civil Service and go to the private sector, like my friend did when he left the Cabinet position and went back to the private sector. Therefore, people would not have to worry about their position, they would be quite happy to leave an uncomfortable position and go and get happiness. I welcome

my friend because once again, he has a smile on his face.

Sir, we have to find ways to get effective Government and one of the best ways to do that would be to free up the system and allow civil servants to make a choice. As it now stands, as one enters the Civil Service, one is now bound to remain in the system for a 10-year period when, in fact, if one enters the system and does not like it, one should be free to leave with benefits, as soon as possible, so that one would not have to frustrate the system but would be able to maximise the usage of everything that is within it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those of us with foresight would understand the point I am making, and those who only want to see it from a political point of view, would not understand this particular point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to understand that we need to develop a climate in this country, where the workers and private sectors could believe that they are a part of the growth of this country. It cannot be seen where both the private and public sectors could believe that but yet the workers would continue to believe that they have been sidelined, even though the present Government of Barbados has put a good case.

The Government has told the people of Barbados what hardship they had to go through, yet one would have thought, that based on the arguments that were used in the early 1990s, that the Government would have understood the hardship and would have cushioned it with some type of proper increase.

Sir, Government talked about it but instead of doing that, have practised wage restraint. It is as if one understands the problem but has failed to give the medication to correct the problem. If they were doctors, they would have been sued

for malpractice because they would have understood the medicine needed for the patient but yet would have given the wrong medicine to the patient. I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would not do something like that, neither would he agree with something like that, therefore, I can understand his position when these matters come before Cabinet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from this end I have said that I will not support it because, based on Table 14, the people of Barbados are entitled to more. The Government cannot be practising a system where they are saying that everything must be judged based on inflation, and when one looks at the increases in their revenues, one would see that they could not have amassed the amount that they have done, if it were done based on inflation.

Sir, the private sector cannot be seeing inflation nor can their profits be based on inflation. Sir, it must be one consistent measurement throughout the country where the same measurement used for the workers must be used for the Government and for the private sector. Therefore, Government cannot be using one measure, the private sector using another, and when it comes to the workers, Government then puts inflation as an issue before deciding.

Sir, the measurement that should be used is the ability to pay and it is clear from Table 14, the Statement of Current Revenue for the 10-year period, that the Government has the ability to pay, based on the increases in revenue that they had over that period.

Sir, for example, in 1997-1998, the current revenue of Government has increased by more than 22.38 per cent, nearly as much in one year, as the workers received for a 10-year period. As for the private sector, in one year 2000-2001, they were able to brag about a 27.37 per cent more than the workers.

Sir, when one looks at the statistics, one would recognise that the workers of Barbados have been taken for a ride, and that the unions have been very patriotic to the country and not necessarily to the workers. Therefore, they need to redress that imbalance. They need to understand that the workers of Barbados need disposable income in the same way that both Government and the private sector need some. They also need to understand that they need to get closer to be able, not only to get disposable income to buy food, shelter and clothing, but to be able to get savings and to be able to increase those savings, so that they could be transformed into investments, so that now Barbados is for sale, they too, would be able to buy a piece.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I noted that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is not supporting the increase for the public sector workers or for the pensioners of Barbados.

Aside.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member has indicated that he is not supporting any increase for any of the categories under today's discussion, such as public sector workers, pensioners, judges, His Excellency, nor any of the Honourable Members.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want the Honourable Member to stand and to declare that, as a matter of principle rather than grandstanding, he will not be drawing a cheque from this Parliament when he is not supporting the increase.

Sir, it sounds very pretty to say that one is not going to support these increases but I would hate to think that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would be the first person to run through the green gates to the Accounts Department of Parliament, to collect his cheque.

House No.15(30)3:50 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I said that even though I did not put an argument between 1999 and 2003 because it would have affected my status then, that I am putting it now, that it must not be based on the same terms of seniority as the new deputy but that it must be a position for the Opposition and seniority must not count. This means that the leader should be free to choose whoever he wants to and that no one should feel I want it because it counts in seniority as it relates to me. Sir, if any other senior person wants the position, he is free to have it.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I fully support the argument advanced by the Honourable Member in his quest to be recognised and have the path paved for him to be declared Deputy Leader. He did a great job as Deputy Leader between 1999 and earlier this year and is now making the point that were it not for seniority he would still be deputy leader because if it were left open for the leader to choose who he want, he would have been the one chosen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to praise the public officers of this country. We have over 50 Government departments and statutory corporations making up a formidable

governmental structure for a country of this size. The reality is that improvements need to be made because not every department functions as it should but, at the end of the day, we have to conclude that things work in Barbados. The relatively smooth operations of this country can be attributed to the nature and character of the system we have here in this island.

Sir, over 25 000 persons are employed by the Government in a range of occupations. They help discharge activities in the social sector to help our people advance themselves, they fashion our economic policies, keep track of statistics, promote investment in tourism and other industries as well as in various legal and regulatory functions, to ensure good order and respect for the rule of law so that we are all able to operate in Barbados and it is clear that they deserve the best that this country is able to afford.

Sir, the fact that every individual may not be the best exemplar of what public service should be, it does not take away from the fact that in the aggregate, if we are honest, we have to conclude that compared to many countries around the world we have an efficient public sector.

Sir, public sector wage determination, at the end of the day, usually rest on what we as a country can afford. Our hearts reach out and we wish we could do more but we can only give what we can afford. Sir, the Honourable Member touted some statistics. They were not bogus but they were incomplete because....

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is saying that Table 14 of the Estimates of Barbados is bogus or incomplete because those are the figures which I quoted.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Perhaps I should withdraw my support for him as deputy leader of his Party. Sir, I made no reference to Table

14 of the Estimates because it is complete as far as it goes and I know what it says, Sir. I said that the figures the Honourable Member used in support of his argument are incomplete.

Sir, perhaps, I should be the advocate for the workers in his business because if we took his argument to its logical conclusion, it would mean that you simply place the level of increase on your revenue. If you were to count the takings at Moontown or any business in Barbados on a Friday night and take no account of expenditure like electricity, insurance, wine, spirits or other things, we would have to agree that the workers in that establishment should get a better increase. The Honourable Member as a businessman should know better that this but clearly, he is trying his best and hoping that the public would be less than discerning with that kind of incompleteness. Sir, I am ashamed of him in that regard.

The reality is that in the financial year 1994/1995, the Government spent \$422 million in terms of its annual wage bill and over the last nine years, we have increased it by \$200 million. In the Estimates of 2003/2004, the wage bill is \$624 million. This administration spends over \$200 million more per year to pay its public officers than when the Democratic Labour Party was in power and this was after we had restored the 8 per cent. In terms of the increases being proposed this year, there will be an additional \$16.9 million, next year there will be an additional \$26.3 million and in 2005/2006 an additional \$26.6 million will be added to the wage bill.

Sir, at the end of the day, we have to make sure that we do not follow the poor example of the Democratic Labour Party when, in a partial regrading of the civil service in 1989, for purely political reason and in order to benefit persons best known to themselves, they undertook a regrading that was the most unfair. It was an iniquitous exercise which bore no

semblance of equity or justice whatsoever. A few people shared \$35 million among themselves to the disadvantage of the others. This was done at the time prior to the elections and when the country could ill-afford it and it further added to the economic difficulties. The vast majority who got none of that \$35 million, lost their jobs and the remaining lost 8 per cent of their pay, that was their approach to the adjustment of salaries.

H15/16:00Sequence 31

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. R.R. FARLEY What have we done by way of contrast? By way of contrast we were not only able to provide a wage increase every year since we have been in office but it has been a decent and fair increase as well.

I want to remind this Honourable House that in the year 1995 that there were increases of 2.5 per cent at the top and 3.5 at the bottom; in 1996, 3 per cent; 1997, 6.2 per cent; 1998, 3 per cent; 1999, 4 per cent; 2000, 2.5 per cent; 2001, 3 per cent and 2002, 2.75 per cent. Sir, contrast that with the wage freeze and wage cut by the Democratic Labour Party when they were in office.

Sir, when we hear the Honourable Member for St. Lucy crying long crocodile tears that look like a mirage but if you touch them they are as dry as dry ice.

It rings very hollow for the Democratic Labour Party to claim to represent the interest of public officers in this country. Over the last nine years the accumulative increase in wages of public officers has been in the order of 28 per cent.

Asides

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: I want to make the point that the increases which are being proposed take account of some of the key issues in public finance, that is to ensure that we are able to pay these wages and to continue to be able to do other things as well. For example, we want to ensure that the payment of the increase wages, well- deserved, does not translate into an automatic need to increase taxes because we have a programme in place for a progressive reduction of income taxes and other taxes in this country. We also want to ensure that it does not lead to a reduction in government services.

One of the ways, in other countries, that governments increase salaries is by slashing services. We as a people are demanding an expansion of government services, a reduction in taxes as well as ensuring that those persons who give public service are not disadvantaged. In fact, they are able to improve their livelihood by way of increased salaries.

Sir, we also have to ensure that we do not, like the Honourable Members on the other side, to take these steps to lead in a fall of confidence in the Barbados dollar because that confidence is fundamental to our economic system.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West likes to talk a lot about the dollar. If history is any guide to the future we can rest assure that he would be talking about the Barbados dollar. We are going to make sure, unlike them, that this increase will not have a negative impact in that regard.

Sir, in the days when middle income countries like Barbados do not have access to concessionary international finance, you have to do what is necessary to protect your credit rating in the market as well. Those are the elements of what I would consider to be fiscal prudence and this increase is able to be

afforded within that framework of fiscal prudence. It is not a matter of looking good on one side whilst doing damage on the other, unlike the example set by the Democratic Labour Party.

I would support these increases because they are similar to what has happened in the private sector. I have information on a number of settlements that have been entered into by private companies, some of them in the hotel sector, manufacture, retail and other services. The settlements that have been entered into by the trade union movement and the private sectors are very much within this range.

For example, eleven, two-year collective agreements were settled and the highest percentage for anyone year was 3 per cent and the percentage increase over the two years ranged between 2.5 and 6 per cent. A number of three-year agreements were settled and the agreements ranged from 6.25 per cent to a maximum of 9 per cent.

Sir, the major difference between the private and public sector wage settlements is that in several of the private sector companies they have provision for productivity and performance bonuses on an annual basis. I look forward to the day when the work in the public sector proceeds to the point where in addition to the general wage increase, we could also look towards productivity performance bonuses, so that at the end of the year persons who gave good public service could look forward to see some benefit by way of productivity and performance bonuses. Sir, it would also act as a form of incentive for people to perform and that has been the case in the private companies.

The method of accessing productivity these days has evolved to the point where there is no difficulty or challenge in measuring productivity and other measures of

performance in relation to service industry, whether in government or other aspects of the services sector.

Sir, to set this matter in its proper context, we must be reminded that this administration more than any other administration has paid attention to other terms and conditions of service, for example, the physical conditions under which our employees work. I need not list the number of government offices where extensive work has been carried out, a number of our police stations, office complexes, improvement to the air-conditioning, electrical supply and better physical surroundings.

Sir, millions of dollars have been spent on improving the equipment which is used by the government workers in the discharge of their various duties. Generally, the occupational and safety of workers in the various government departments is being addressed. There is more work to be done but we are moving steadily along.

Earlier today the Honourable Leader of the House listed a number of areas in which agreement has been reached with the unions by way of further improvements in terms of condition of service, in relation to having a comprehensive statement of account of where we are in relation to how various posts in government are graded.

Sir, we would recall that the Honourable Prime Minister indicated that a comprehensive job evaluation exercise was being undertaken within the public sector . . .

H15: 16.10 p.m.

Sequence 32

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

4:00 p.m.

Continuation of Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

It was a two-phase exercise. Phase 1 being a diagnostic phase, and Phase 2 of that exercise involved the actual evaluation of all jobs across the public sector, and that continued well into this year.

I want to let you know, Sir, that this job evaluation exercise is one in which we do not look at jobs in isolation only, but how they relate, all across the board. A committee including representatives of CTUSAB, the Government and consultants of this exercise have been responsible for the production of a report.

The report has recently been completed and will now, Sir, be the subject of discussion, and further study by the unions and the Government, before the implementation of several of the recommendations. I am pleased, Sir, that this matter of job evaluation is coming to a conclusion.

Sir, it is very important that we correct several of the anomalies which currently exist and have existed for many years. Some of them were based on the traditional structure of the civil service. Others were based on the changing times and the fact that we must ensure that the public sector is able to attract the skills and talents that are required.

The public sector is in competition with the private sector, for many positions. In many cases, we are not able to match the private sector dollar for dollar. What is key, however, is that we need to make sure that in terms of others terms of conditions, such as the security of tenure, and opportunities for training, that we are able to provide inducements for people to be willing to join the public sector.

For example, currently some 194 public

officers, are on full pay leave, while pursuing further and professional academic training and this is across a range of fields. This ability to improve education and training is one of the great inducements which we have to use to attract people to the public sector.

The reality, Sir, is that there are many private sector enterprises which are small and cannot afford the loss of the time to allow people to study. There are others that are large and can afford but, perhaps, have an antiquated view that they may be in a better position to retain the employees and perhaps to control those employees by not offering training.

The Government, I am pleased to say, Sir, has a more enlightened approach to the training of its workers, and the Government spends millions of dollars on an annual basis on this training.

Sir, there is every reason why I take a different position from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I believe that these increases are consistent with what is happening in the wider society, by way of the private sector wage settlements. I believe that these increases can be afforded without doing violence to the public finances of this country. They are consistent with the Government's very clear vision of an expanded public sector, and we look forward to continuing to work with the unions of Barbados in a productive relationship.

I therefore, Sir, have no hesitation whatsoever in supporting the various Resolutions before us. I want to urge all within the sound of my voice, that the Democratic Labour Party and those who will come after me to make the various mouthings, which are almost predictable, will come as if they are lambs, when we know them for the wolves that they are.

We know that they will come to make the

claim that they can do a whole range of things, some pie in the sky, hopes, dreams and aspirations, because they are in the position where they do not have to prove anything. They can say anything, and they most likely will say anything. They will both be wild and wide in their pronouncements, but by their fruits, we will know them.

Sir, the seven over there are of the same mold of their former leader, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, who made very pejorative pronouncements of the civil service.

Asides.

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: It is in Hansard.

Sir, they are of the same mold and same Party of the former Prime Minister who cut the civil servants salaries and sent home civil servants. They are of the same mold and the same Party as the two, the Honourable Member for St. John and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who, in this Parliament in 1995 or thereabouts, voted against the Constitutional amendment which sought to give Constitutional protection to the salaries of public officers.

Remember, Sir, that this Government, the ruling indicating the Government of the day was within its legal right to cut the workers(salaries, we felt, Sir, that no Government at any time in the future, should have that legal loophole which they could use. We came to this Parliament to amend the Constitution, the highest law of the land, to protect public officers from the likes of the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, they should have come clean and said, we have sinned, we repent, we are so sorry, we want a chance to do it all over again. Instead, they are saying, we want to be able to cut your salaries, right, left and centre, again, if we so choose and you could like it or lump it. Two of

them over there, said, no, we like it so, we must have that, Sir. When they come, we have to judge them, based on their fruit, by their fruit, we shall know them.

Sir, I want to set this debate on salary increases for public officers across a range of posts, in its proper context, because two of them are still over there, and in typical fashion, Sir, the former Leader of the Democratic Labour Party, or whatever he is...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, to whom are you referring?

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Sir, I know that you would do nothing to disadvantage the public workers of Barbados, but a senior member of the Democratic Labour Party, Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the best Dem that there ever was, has indicated that they would want to deny the public workers of Barbados these increases, as proposed. They do not want them to have an increase for Christmas. Can you imagine that? More than 2 500 hard-working public officers, performing public service, have to hear from those over there that they do not deserve a cent. Sir, not one cent they want to give them.

Asides,

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: I only hope, Sir, that I do not have to come to St. Lucy to make this same argument for the employees of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with this, I am pleased to support this Resolution. I thank the public officers of Barbados for their continued commitment and dedication. I thank those who still have to labour under conditions that are less than perfect, for their willingness to sacrifice themselves, in order to ensure that the

wheels of Government continue to turn.

House 15, sequence 33, 16:2014

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

I would want to let them know that the programme of reform, the programme of the improvement of their condition of service, the programme for the improvement of the physical conditions under which they work and a range of other improvements are very much in the works and will continue. They have the commitment of a Government that has proven its worth. They have the commitment of a Government that proves that it can be trusted. They have the commitment of a Government that shows that the public officers of Barbados are not left behind and that they share in the progress and prosperity of this country.

I am pleased to support this Resolution.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am somewhat saddened today. I am saddened today because this Government has again affronted the workers of this country. I will continue to stand up when I see injustices and significant injustices being meted out on the workers in this country by a Government that has demonstrated that it is uncaring.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not by accident that the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados refused to be part of this travesty, so I want to congratulate them today. I also want to congratulate the Barbados Workers(Union; the Barbados Secondary Teachers Union; the Prison Officers; the Police; the Barbados Association of Principals of Secondary Schools in Barbados; the Association of Principals of Primary Schools and the Barbados Registered Nurses Association because they had good sense not to

accept this intolerable offer.

I want the people of this country to understand that it is this Government that has created a condition in Barbados that makes it necessary to undermine their interest at this stage. I will demonstrate that, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a government wage bill contributes significantly to the overall expenditure of a government. It is a significant component of a deficit or a surplus depending upon the situation at the time. If this Government did not put the interest of its political friends and the interest of the private sector of Barbados before the public sector of Barbados and if this Government did not mismanage this economy, they would have been in a position to give the workers their just due.

I want to draw to this Honourable House attention a statement that was made by the Leader of Government Business in her initial submission. That statement was that even though the Barbadian economy was in recession, there was an increase in public sector wages. I want also to draw to the Honourable House attention the International Monetary Fund Article IV consultation of February 21, 2003 which is already a document of the House. It states that due to public sector wage increases in the face of a short recession Government had to introduce fiscal stimulus and emergency measures so as to reduce its debt and its deterioration in finances of public enterprises and also to contain a deficit of the non financial public sector that was widening substantially from three-quarter per cent of GDP in 2000-2001 to 4.5 per cent in 2002. Is that fiscal prudence? That is fiscal madness. That is absolute foolishness and economic imprudence. I am only referring to all of the geniuses over there who come in here and masquerade. That condition was created by all of them collectively.

Sir, I will now be a little bit slower so that they would become educated. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government is (a borrow, borrow(Government and (a spend, spend(Government. This is a Government that has spent on legitimate and illegitimate projects.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: On a point of order. Illegitimate only has one meaning in this House of Assembly, it means against the law. A Government which would engage in spending which is against the law would have created a most serious breach, so the Honourable Member has to withdraw that statement, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you withdraw or rephrase what you just said?

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I will rephrase it, Sir, because I am sure there are many men in here who have illegitimate children in Barbados.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is this Government that created the fiscal deficit in Barbados.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a certain amount of proprietary that is expected. The Honourable Members is speaking out of an abundance of ignorance. Under the Succession Act of Barbados, it is impossible to have that which is called an illegitimate child in this country.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: The point I am going to make very specifically here is that this Government created the conditions that are now becoming an albatross around their necks. This Government created the fiscal deficit, the

trade deficit and the national debt that now exist. This Government created the fiscal imprudence and the macroeconomic mismanagement that are now preventing them from giving the workers of this country their just due. That is the point that cannot be refuted.

I cry shame on this Cabinet. They can be defined as a squandermania Cabinet.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to sit idly by and allow the Honourable Member for St. Philip West to get away with what I had cautioned him about. Earlier I was very clear to point out that when Honourable Members contribute to this debate they should speak from a position of fact or they should not speak.

House 15 Sequence 34

4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I am making is that it has come from mouth of the Honourable Member for St. Peter, that in order to protect the employment status of the workers in the aftermath of September 11th, 2001, we took a decision to use counter-cyclical economic policies. We said that we would run a larger than normal fiscal deficit so as not to repeat what the Democratic Labour Party did in the 1990s, that is, they sent home civil servants. Sir, the idea of this Government creating a fiscal deficit is not new to anybody, it was part of a deliberate policy on this side, in order to keep persons employed.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a whole lot of folly. If the Honourable Member would read a book now and again, he

would be able to go back to the 1930s in the crash of the United States of America economy, when President Eisenhower recognised that the economies did not have a natural servo-mechanism to pull them out of recession and Government had to spend in order...

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Sorry, Sir, I stand corrected. It was President Roosevelt.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member wants to distort the United States of America(s) history. I would hate if they had done that to us because I would not have done that to them but Eisenhower was President in the 1950s and not in the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point will not be changed, that is, President Roosevelt recognised that he had to use deficit spending in order to stimulate the American economy. However, there is a point at which that deficit spending cannot be allowed to become a problem in terms of Balance of Payment risk factors.

Sir, when this Government introduced deficit spending at a time when they were widening the trade deficit, at a time when there was not enough foreign exchange earning capacity, and also at a time when they were employing large numbers of individuals in the public sector, I said that is fiscal madness. That cannot be refuted by any Honourable Member on that side.

Sir, I cry shame on this Government because they are now here asking this Opposition to insult pensioners and Government workers at the lower end of the economic ladder, after they have taken taxpayers money and have wasted over \$30 million on the Greenland Landfill;

wasted \$190 million in the GEMS Project; paid off the debt of GEMS at another \$113 million. This Government is telling me that they cannot give the taxpayers \$80 million more. Sir, it is incredible.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I am utilising the \$80 million that is stated in the document that it would have cost if Government had used the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) introduction...

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: That is for you to counter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government has the audacity to come to the Opposition for help. Sir, old people in Barbados have a saying, that is: (Waste not, want not.) Therefore, all the money that was wasted, such as the cost overruns on the Sewerage Project; on the Warrens Project; on the National Housing Corporation project at Country Road; the money that was paid to renovate Eastry House, we want it all now to pay the poor people in this country. I do not want to hear any nonsense about counter-cyclical foolishness. I read with clarity and none of the Honourable Members has read anything of significance or with clarity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to become very specific because I need to explain this very slowly, so that the Honourable Members could understand. Sir, I am looking at the (Z) Scale and would like to do some comparisons.

Sir, on the emoluments section, we have April 01, 2003, a Prime Minister getting a total salary emolument of \$178 264. Sir, in 2005, it is supposed to be \$189 119, an increase of \$10 857.

If I go to the Deputy Prime Minister, \$169 580, in April, 2003, to \$178 000, in 2005, it goes to \$9, 306. When I go to a minister, \$138 960, to \$147 423, an increase of \$8 462, in a matter of over two years. But look at what happens to the pensioners in Barbados.

Sir, look what happens at the bottom of the (Z(Scale, Z-38. \$17 950.08, increased to \$18 488.52, an increase of \$538, divide that by 12 months, equals \$44 per month. Sir, that is ridiculous. When we increased from 2004-2005, we go up by \$555, another increase of \$46.25. But a Prime Minister is going to have an increase of \$10 857 in Barbados? That is ridiculous and, therefore, neither this Opposition nor I, want no part of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us go to the (P(Scale again to reemphasise the point. At the highest level, P-1,

\$93 103.72, increased to \$95 896.83, an increase of

\$2 793, divide that by 12 months, equals \$232.

Sir, let us go to the bottom of the scale where the increase is only \$53. That cannot be right.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Take out your ear plugs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, going further to the (C(Scale, which includes the watchmen in Barbados. Sir, could you imagine that a watchman increase in Barbados is only \$44, and Government wants this Honourable Opposition to support that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are saying that if this Government had exercised the kind of fiscal and prudent management that they should have,

they would not have had to resort to this sort of ...I do not even know what to call it. It is an insult to the poor people of Barbados such as pensioners and public servants who are at the bottom of the economic ladder.

House No.15(35)4:40 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Dr.D.C. ESTWICK:

It is diabolical and sinister that a pensioner who retired prior to 1996, who forms part of the age cohort of more than 85, is now being given \$5. Sir, that is absolutely horrendous. Anyone who understands demographics in Barbados would know that over 85 years is the age cohort that is increasing rapidly in Barbados and this Government gives them \$5, that is what this debate is about for me. Sir, it is a matter of what is decent, morale, kind and in the interest of the masses of the people in this country.

I say that because a few weeks ago in this Honourable House, I indicated that less than one per cent of the population gets more than \$4 000 per month. I also brought evidence to demonstrate that more than 31 per cent of Barbadians get less than \$600 per month and to show that there are many persons in my constituency who get less than \$100 per week yet this Honourable House is supposed to accept this paltry amount for the masses of people in this country. Sir, I cannot accept it and the other Honourable Members of this Opposition will not accept it either.

Mr. Speaker, CTUSAB represents thousands of Barbadians but this Government wants us to believe that those Barbadians are stupid, that they do not understand what is in their interest and that because they decided not to support this position, it must mean that the National Union of Public Workers(analysis is correct.

Sir, I know better, the other members of the Opposition also know better and we will not be part of that foolhardy thinking.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I want to say that this Government misunderstands its responsibility to the people of Barbados. I refer to a working IMF document which I will make a document of the House. When the structural adjustment programme was introduced in Barbados, it stated clearly that the economy of Barbados was in difficulty at the outset of the 1980s. It goes on to say that matters were made worse because Government borrowed large amounts on foreign financial markets to finance fiscal expansion including capital expenditure and that those borrowings were particularly heavy in the later part of the 1980s. When I hear Honourable Members continue to harp on a position to give the public the view that it is the Democratic Labour Party who is at fault, I usually carry them back to this document from the IMF.

Sir, I wish I could go into detail but I want to indicate that when we demitted office, we had a deficit of 2 per cent of GDP at the time and that this Government increased it to 6.3 per cent in 2002, seven years after coming into office in 1994. Sir, they misused it for political gains and expediency. They did not use it in the interest of the masses of people in this country. Sir, that is what the evidence in these reports says to me and to anyone who cares to read them. Sir, I do not have to hide and make statements because the evidence is here to support what I say.

Sir, I want to refer to the Article IV consultation again which ended February 21, 2003 and Barbadians should listen to this statement carefully. It says that the external current account deficit that existed in Barbados in 2002 was 5.5 per cent and that the net capital inflow to cover this external deficit occurred because Government issued a US\$150 million,

twenty-year bond on the international market.

Sir, these fiscal managers, these macroeconomic geniuses had to borrow to bring Barbados out of a twin deficit position. Any Honourable Member can stand up and refute what I say because the evidence to support it is in the Article IV consultation of February 23, 2003 and the IMF working document, Economic Resilience and Barbados experience 1985.

Sir, when these individuals tell me they are not in a position to raise salaries, they are the ones who created this condition after the Democratic Labour Party restructured the economy and had it on a growth path of three per cent in 1992, 1993 and 1994. Sir, I cannot feel sorrow for them. They now tell me that the public servants of Barbados should pay the price and that they cannot get salary increases commensurate with their productivity. Sir, I want no part of that whatsoever.

In my last two remaining minutes I will speak about the Prices and Incomes Protocol. Mr. Speaker, it has been the thinking of some economists that the Prices and Incomes Protocol can be used as part of a macroeconomic strategy. The Joint Economic Committee had a specific purpose when it was established in Barbados in the early 1990s. Any time wage increase is used as the major cost input to business, the objective is to make sure that the profit of the business is used to increase the efficiency of production, in order to produce a cheaper product which is more competitive domestically and internationally but this never happened in Barbados.

H15/16:50

Sequence 36

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Dr. D.C. ESTWICK Despite all the protocols signed, we have not improved our efficiency, we have not increased our production capacity, we have not produced a cheaper product that can compete on the regional or international market so we are going to be in serious trouble when the year 2005 comes.

I want to remind Honourable Members that when the Honourable Prime Minister opened the new Super Centre at Warrens he begged the retail sector to ensure that when 2005 comes and there is access to cheaper products on the market that the consumer would benefit from it. This is not going to happen especially when chicken can be imported into Barbados at twenty-two cents a pound and we are producing it at \$6 a pound. I am aware of the economic realities and those who want to be blind let them be blind.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are happy that the people of this country will have an increase in salary but they should have been given a larger increase commensurate with the work and the sacrifices that were made.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is rare that you find a scenario where one person can speak for so long on such a wide range of issues and in the end deliver of himself so little.

We have to refute a number of very damaging, reckless, baseless trite allegations that were put before this Honourable Chamber. First of all we would have to speak to the question of this claim that the increases as proposed before this Honourable House is an affront to the workers of Barbados.

The reality is, if we are to talk about what has

been delivered to date by Government we cannot be speaking about any affront. We would have to be speaking about a 25 per cent in all the allowances that the public servants of this country enjoyed since 1995 when this Government came into office. We are speaking about travelling allowances, and laundry allowances for the police officers, fire officers and the prison officers.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West who just came off his hind legs and returned to his seat did not speak of the shoe allowance that the nurses at the various hospital would have got. He did not speak of the allowances to the workers at the Ministry of Public Works in connection with asphalt and heavy equipment, and the allowances for doctors.

Sir, I want to pause for a moment on the allowances for doctors because when we speak of allowances for doctors there have been a 25 per cent increase since 1995. Where would a doctor stand in a position to the Honourable Member who just sat?

Asides

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether or not the Honourable Member for St. Philip West needs his seat, it is going to be said that he is a government employee and paid by the public purse. When we are speaking about allowances for doctors, he is one of them who has benefited from the 25 per cent. It is unconscionable for him to be talking about an insult to workers when his salary today is at \$58 000 and this increase would take it to \$76 248 a year.

Sir, when he refers to being on call, today he gets \$20 000 a year and by the end of 2003 it would be at \$24 000 a year, traveling allowance would be \$7 000 and housing allowance would take the Honourable Member's salary to \$110 000. The reality is, that is what he is getting as a

doctor and it does not refer to what he is being paid as a Member of Parliament. Sir, when the Honourable Member gets his increase, he will be getting \$42 700 a year. This is the same Honourable Member who talks about public servants being insulted. How much more does the Honourable Member want?

The Honourable Member has \$10 810 as entertainment. How can one be so greedy? How much more does it take to satisfy the Honourable Member? Is it an affront that he is now going to have \$10 810 in his pocket? This is the same Honourable Member, who just took his seat, after lambasting this Government as worthless and not giving money to public servants, that Honourable Member would be getting \$12 050 a year for travelling allowance.

Sir, when you total what he would have at the end of 2003, it will be \$151 873. He said that this Government is indifferent and insensitive and would not give more money to public servants.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you want to know what the same Honourable Member who lambasts this Government would be taking home at the end of 2005? He would be taking home \$175,000.

I am saying this for the people of Ebenezer, Brereton, Marchfield, St. Patrick and all of the people on whose behalf that he standing and keeping noise. I cannot believe that a human being(s) could be so greedy that he would want to consume such a vast proportion of the public(s) purse. Sir, the headline of tomorrow(s) Press should be, Can the Honourable Member for St. Philip West be satisfied.

Asides

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: When I came into this Honourable House and we were debating the Public Accounts Committee, I said that I

believe that as a young member we have to commit ourselves to try to get past this empty partisan nonsense and try to build a country and promote an environment where serious public discourse is taking place and I stand by that, Sir.

Sir, I could not find it possible to know that my (craw(has been fattened to the tune of nearly \$50 000 and I am saying that there should be more. The question that has to be asked is, how does the Government continue to fuel that kind of unrealistic desire?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is truly shameful is that this is a Government that is taking lashes after it moved the ceiling on vehicle loans from \$20 000 to \$35 000 for public officers of Barbados. It then increased the repayment period from five years to seven years and postmen can now purchase motorcycles free of duty. Speaker, it is not only about the dollars and cents of the issue. There is the whole process of negotiation, restructuring and improving conditions of service in the public sector of Barbados. There has been general improvement in the public sector. Every police station has been improved.

H15: 17.00Sequence 37

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

5:00 p.m.

Continuation of Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS:

When I came to the Bar nine years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the conditions were terrible, policemen were (scotching(with prisoners. Policemen also had to put their own personal possessions and shove them in a desk because there were no lockers. Some police officers had to sleep on something akin to old rag, passing as a mattress and there was a shortage of vehicles. Sir, all of those things have been

improved and this is true in every ministry of Government.

It is not perfect. There is no Government in the world that can boast of a panacea, but you cannot be heard to speak with clear conscience and say that the conditions overall of public servants in Barbados, have not improved. This is what caused me to come to my feet. Every time that Honourable Member misbehaves himself in that way, I will say this in reprimand of him. It is improper and imprudent for him to be heard, in the Chamber, and castigating the Government in a baseless way.

When he said that there is no improvement in the quality of life for the public service of Barbados, to whom is he speaking? Certainly, not himself because I would be glad for the kind of money that he takes home. The fact of the matter is that we are also speaking about a situation in which there has been a very serious effort to provide for non-salary issues, and I want to speak about that.

This Chamber must not delude itself into believing that whenever we come to the table to negotiate, we are only talking about dollars and cents. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is an employer, and I gather a descent employer, and he knows that there has to be a consideration given, not only to the pay check but also to the quality, and conditions of service, et cetera. Barbados must emancipate itself from the form of mental slavery which leads it to believe that we can only treat with workers and improve their quality of condition and life, if we are only talking about a dollar bill.

Sir, we are at a stage now where we have to be contemplating, as a Government, the question of health insurance for people who are in the public service. I truly believe that this must be something on the minds of Union. I believe that any self respecting union official in

Barbados would want to know that there is a provision, in terms of health insurance, optical and dental care, to help the people whom he represents.

When I was at the private Bar, Sir, and this would be the experience of several others who have practiced in this country where, for example, a serious car accident takes place involving a public servant and he or she has to pay for an MRI, the Magnetic Resonance Imaging, on the spine, which can cost \$1 000 or more, as well as the cost of the laboratory services. Sir, people have to pay these costs out of their pockets because there is no compulsory health insurance in place.

These are incidentals which we should be thinking of implementing, as part of a developmental programme for the people of Barbados. If I come to this Parliament and hear that, I would feel proud to be in a Parliament which is sufficiently visionary to be speaking to the implementation of these bold, new exciting and innovating programmes.

Sir, we come here and hear the Leader of the Opposition fumbling, lame and bankrupt of policy, and a would-be Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, who really is a disgrace to the Party that he represents, to the people and to himself, even though he would not admit it.

Sir, the people elected him in their wisdom and I know that in their wisdom, they would forgive themselves and they will correct it.

Sir, when I had the privilege of writing for the newspaper, one of the things that I said, and I stand on the point today, is that we cannot think in terms of building a Barbados tomorrow and you have no discourse or discussion for something like paternity leave in this country.

Sir, we want to build families. The Ministry

of Social Transformation, come to Cabinet every week, and makes bold commitments and tries to bring to the table energetic policy. We want to be able to engage the country on something like paternity leave. When a woman gets pregnant, it is not only the responsibility of the woman, the family as a whole has to provide the supporting mechanism, and the man in the household should be able to involve himself.

The Barbados Workers Union, to its credit, has engaged the private sector on this matter. We do not hear the Opposition trying to speak to these issues. We do not hear the Opposition benches trying to urge public discourse. We could discuss it, debate it, come to policy on it and come to agreement. Instead, we take these fundamental, developmental human agenda issues and we shove them under a table, hide them under a rug and treat them as though they are backstreet. Then, you come to the Chamber, the highest court of the land, you make mock sport and talk about who gets \$5 increase and you insult the intellect of the people.

If somebody is working for \$10 today, and there is a 10 per cent he is working for \$11 tomorrow. If a man is working for \$200 and there is a 10 per cent increase, then he is working for \$20 more. The fact of the matter is that the argument, the logic behind that which the Honourable Member for St. Philip West just delivered of himself, he could best have done it, Sir, in a seated position elsewhere.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Phillip South speak very eruditely about this matter and I want to just touch on it briefly. Sir, wages are a question of commitment. Our wage Bill hovers around 40 per cent of Government(s commitments, and that is inclusive of statutory corporations.

Sir, when NIS is added, taking into

consideration all the statutory corporations, the wage Bill will be climbing somewhere in the vicinity of 50 per cent. Sir, you then add a commitment of debt servicing, because you have to service your debt portfolio, when that is done, Sir, you are up to 60 per cent or, perhaps, 65 per cent. There then becomes a strain on the flexibility of Government to have the kind of disposable income to service other essential goods and services that we provide. Education and health services are delivered free of cost, and the fact of the matter remains that the increase in education costs in this country have not been and inflicted on the backs of the public. The consumers in health cannot say that they have felt the increases, because they have been subsidised by the Government.

Housing in Barbados, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has remained as is today and for several years. The public transportation in Barbados has remained fixed for several years. All these are essential social services which the poor black people of Barbados are enjoying which the Government provides and subsidises. While the Government is doing that, we are heard at the same time that we are supposed to heed every demand, reasonable and unreasonable, under the sun. It cannot happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West does the country a disservice when he comes in here with that kind of argument. Sir, when he realises the near idiocy of that which he utters, he then says that if we did not mismanage the economy, we would have more money.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we were mismanaging the economy, then in September of 2001, the public servants would have gone home, as they went home in the United States, and as they went home in England.

House 16, sequence 38, 17:1014

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS:

The Government of Barbados was the first Government in this hemisphere to convene a consultation with the private sector and the unions in order to protect and maintain the economic status quo after September 11, 2001.

If the Honourable Member for St. Philip West had done his homework, he would have recognised that there was no way under the sun that this Government could be mismanaging the economy. Research would indicate that in 2000-2001 wage increases in Barbados were, this was in a year of a decline, 2.5 per cent at the top and 2.5 per cent at the bottom. In 2002, there was a three per cent wage increase at the top and three per cent at the bottom. In 2002-2003 it was 2.75 per cent across the board. So even when we were in a period of decline, far from sending home people, this Government was looking after them and ensuring that there were increases in wages.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On what do you rise?

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am rising on a point of order because it is necessary. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because if the Government makes a decision to increase Government expenditure and widen the deficit at a time when the economy is not earning foreign exchange, that cannot make macroeconomic sense, that is an imprudent decision which will contribute to macroeconomic instability. The Honourable Member does not know anything about economics.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West knows all. He is on record as saying that nobody can teach him

anything in this House.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: What he did not refute is the fact that he is carrying home more money than anybody else. He can get up again and refute that.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is indeed a stranger to all forms of truth. I will refer to the calculations that were done by me with respect to the various salaries and so on. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because a minister, even a junior one, received, subsequent to the increase, \$147 423, the previous would have been \$138 906. That was before April 1, 2001 if he wants to be specific. There is no way that this Honourable Member is earning that type of revenue on an annual basis.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, continue, please.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I stand on the four pillars of my argument that in 2003-2005 the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would be earning \$175 000. Instead of coming in here and wining and complaining and calling for more, he should be explaining to the people of Brereton where he hides and why he hides from them and explain also to the people of Ebenezer why he hides down at the Geriatric Hospital from them, that is what he should be doing. Dr. D. C. ESTWICK On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not allow the Honourable Member to be pugnacious in his ignorance. All of the people of Sinckler Alley and Ebenezer know that my constituency branch has conducted a petition in Sinckler Alley with respect to roads and water and has made a submission to the Barbados Workers(Union on their behalf. He should stay in St.

James Central, but even there he does not know what is going on in his constituency.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I am not going back to him and I am not even going to ask him why his branch president resigned. I will not do it.

The fact of the matter is that if we are going to stick to this debate, then we have to continue to talk to the wages. None of the Honourable Members on that side made any contact as it relates to wages in the private sector. Had they been interested in doing any research, they would know that three major companies in Barbados did some wage negotiations in August of 2003.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, three-year agreements are nothing strange. I have made the point that it allows both sides to have an opportunity to assess what other aspect of workers improvement, conditions et cetera they can put on the table. The two-year agreement is a very limiting arrangement in terms of flexibility. In the private sector, if you would permit me, Sir, Roberts Manufacturing in August of this year entered into a three-year agreement for 6.5 per cent. In August of this year Standards Distributor did a similar thing, but theirs is only for 5 per cent. At F. W. Woolworth, theirs is a 6.25 per cent agreement, but the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have us argue in the reverse.

We came after and we are settling at a higher rate of increase. The private sector is being set an example by the Government. The Government has remained committed to ensuring that a level of increase is not only satisfactory but at the same time we have been sufficiently prudent to realise that the increase

should not far outstrip that which inflation would recommend. Sir, there was a time in the Democratic Labour Party when that understanding of the relationship between wages and inflation was understood. There was a time in the 1960s and the 1970s when the Democratic Labour Party practised a Keynesian demand management form of economics. That was before the Honourable Member for St. Philip West became a Dem. At that stage he was still fighting to get out of school, but at that point they were committed to that understanding.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, the realities of a small open economy do not change that fundamentally. I want to say in all seriousness that when we speak to these kinds of issues in debates that we have to come with clean hands, clean hearts and good consciences. Sir, the question of taxation in Barbados has to be made because Government has obviously lost significant sums of revenue by way of reducing its tax intake. It is not only by way of personal income tax, it is by way of a commitment to reduce corporation taxes and it is by a commitment and an effectuation of a reduction in land taxes which Honourable Members on that side also sought to oppose, and if I remember correctly they did oppose.

Sir, you cannot separate the reality of a person working in the public service and owning a piece of land and not having to pay land tax on it, not having to pay as high a degree of personal income tax and at the same time be calling for the same amount of increase that the Honourable Member... In fact, the Honourable Members on that side did not tell you what increase they would go with, they just say that what we gave is not enough. Nobody on that side has said today that this is our macro-financial analysis and this is where we would recommend that Government go. Their

job is not to do that. Their job is to get up and say, as in the words of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, that \$175 000 is not enough money for him to take home and he is (blue vex) about that and he does not want to hear anything from anybody on this side because all of us are geniuses and we should know that he cannot be satisfied with a \$175 000 in his back pocket. That is the position of the Opposition, but Government cannot run so.

We have to do the macro-financial analysis, the scientific assessment and the calculation because at the end of the day, there must not be a reduction in the delivery of social services to the people of Barbados. That is the bottom line. When once therefore you are talking about having to provide public transportation for the little children to get to school on mornings, that must be factored into the equation.

House 15 Sequence 39

5:20 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we are speaking to the fact that there must be opportunities for persons to enjoy housing accommodations and for Government to subsidise it, that must be factored into the equation. Hence, education, the Prison, and all of it, come at a cost and, therefore, the Honourable Members of the Opposition have done themselves an injustice. When they speak, they do not speak of the reduction of the tax intake that Government has committed itself to and has already begun to implement. Sir, the two cannot be divorced, they are essential parts of the process.

Sir, again we have to be mindful of the fact

that when we come to the table, we recognise that we have come out of a recession. Yes, we are speaking about a 2 per cent rate of economic growth but Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot commit ourselves to a position which would cause us a lowering of our foreign credit rating.

We cannot commit ourselves to a position where, far from reducing taxes, we would be so structurally bound by the wage commitment that we would have to increase taxes. We cannot commit ourselves to a reverse gear where we reduce services and the necessary expenditure that goes with that. We cannot commit ourselves to a situation, where there would be a reduced confidence in the Barbados dollar, as has happened in the 1990s. Sir, I say that again for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition because he was an advisor at the time. We cannot reduce ourselves to a position as has happened in the 1990s, where there was a higher interest rate on foreign loans. There has to be an understanding about what we are doing and how we place our commitments.

Sir, I would want to say that there is another area of great concern to us and that is, to introduce initiatives which are aimed at identifying strengths and weaknesses of public officers, and improving the quality of management.

Mr. Speaker, in all of this debate, no contact has been made with the quality of the delivery which the public officers deliver. There has to be some issue of management and, therefore, we are looking at improving the quality of management. That is something that we have also recognised that has to be taken to the table. I, therefore, believe that we are looking at a win-win programme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for being so indulging.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is with a genuine measure of reluctance that I join in this debate because the Government has proven to have a pattern of not listening to good reasoning, the good reasoning that was put by the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB), by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, and, indeed, by the Honourable Members for St. Lucy and St. Philip West.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would find that I would be a lot more measured in my presentation, unlike the previous contribution from the Honourable Member for St. James Central, little Tommy Tucker, singing for his supper. He has to prove to the whole world that he is a bigger Bee than Sir Grantley Adams, because none of them likes him.

The Honourable Member for St. James South is agreeing with me. I want the Honourable Member to know that when he had cursed her in 1999, I had told him not to do it, that she was always a favorite of mine.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had to sit and listen to a young man who has pledged to the world by taking something called the Hippocratic oath, to which the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would be familiar, which doctors take where they swear to preserve life.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West clearly possesses one of the finest medical minds in Barbados because Honourable Members from that side have consulted with him for medical advice, and I would like them to deny that. The Honourable Member is working but because he has served as a medical doctor in the public sector of Barbados, he is being berated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not satisfied with the Hippocratic oath, he has chosen to get into public life, which I think should be admirable.

What the Honourable Member for St. James Central should be worried about, is that the Member of the Cabinet of Barbados who, supposedly are not to be practising law but who has files at home doing conveyances, Honourable Members of this Cabinet who do not stand and say one word in major debates in his Honourable House but are still practising law. Let us talk about Honourable Members, who, while they were Members in the Other Place and while they were chairing statutory corporations, have built massive legal empires, so much so that they could go and buy rural constituencies. And you are going to go after a young man who has committed himself via the Hippocratic oath to the preservation of life in this country?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the one thing the Honourable Member has said that was correct was that if one is coming here, they should come with clean hands and a clean heart.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I have already said, it is with a measure of reluctance that I have been moved to join in this debate, but I want you to understand something else, it does not end there...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you please address the Chair.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they want to talk about the struggle of an opposition politician, let us talk about some of the Honourable Members on that side, and about the emoluments and the crafty and creative ways in which this Government has gone about enhancing the coffers of persons out there. For example, a consultant in the Ministry of International Business has lost an attempt to get a seat. She has not as yet been replaced. What was she down there doing? A consultant in the Ministry of Economic Affairs has now

been promoted to the Ministry of Tourism. Apparently, he has been earmarked to succeed the Honourable Member for St. Michael South when the Prime Minister releases him of his duties, that is according to him, because he said that he is the next Minister of Tourism.

There was a consultant to the Drug Service and the people of St. Michael South Central took care of that. There was another consultant, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, in the Ministry of Social Transformation. What is his job description? I would be very curious to hear. He is jumping up and down in here all the time talking about the black man this and the black man that, yet drives into Parliament yard in his

\$100 000 European car and still gets salaries as a consultant and as a backbencher. Sir, yet we are going to be hearing foolishness about what salaries Honourable Member are working for.

There is another consultant as well, who is now Chairman of the National Assistance Board. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have always heard what I thought as a joke, that consulting was the second oldest profession in the world. Anytime that someone cannot find or does not have work, that person becomes a consultant. Sir, I would say this much, indeed, when one looks at the track record of some of these men who have been members of every political party in Barbados over short periods of time, men who hang their political hats wherever their personal interests are served, it is but a small wonder that the Leader of Government Business would have to call for prostitution to be made legal in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Grantley Adams House in Roebuck Street, has now become a den of vice.

House No.15(40)5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. R.L. SEALY:

Hon. H.E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The remarks made by the Honourable Member who just took his seat are really so offensive that they go against the rules of this House about being derogatory about members. To describe the headquarters of the Barbados Labour Party as the largest brothel in the country is the kind of thing that has to be expunged from the records because we cannot allow it. While I accept the comments made before as good political stuff, there is a level to which we should not sink and the Honourable Member has gone there. I wish to ask him not to be so exuberant and to recognise that an apology is warranted in these circumstances. He has not only (mashed) the crease but he has gone too far.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please rephrase your statement.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I unreservedly withdraw the remarks.

Hon. H.E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the application before the Chamber was that not only should there be a withdrawal but that the comments should be struck from the records. I do not wish to usurp the functions of the Chair but it is also the kind of statement that warrants an apology.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, it was always my intentions to have the statement expunged from the record. The Honourable Member has withdrawn it unreservedly. Please continue.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this debate is a debate of significant national importance. We have over 30 000 public sector workers in this country and the stability of our

country is inextricably woven with the welfare of our public sector workers. I have a number of constituents who work at public institution but beyond that, this is a debate of significant national importance and Government is having difficulty in forming a working relationship with the public sector workers of Barbados. It is unfortunate that consensus could not have been built throughout the entire trade union sector but this is not the first time and it is becoming a pattern.

It would be bad enough if it were in isolation but we are seeing an industrial relation climate in Barbados that is poor and deteriorating on a daily basis. It is particularly offensive that time and time again Government seems to be the largest offender as an employer. There are workers from several different departments who are taking industrial action for a wide range of reasons and this should concern us when we come to this House to deal with the issue of increased salaries for the workers.

I look forward to the day when a medical scheme will be put in place for public workers. I hope it was not lip service on the part of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. It is clear that perhaps the Honourable Member did not study her brief very effectively because she insisted that the salary for the Senior Minister was effective immediately, but a note from Cabinet Office had to be passed to her which said it was retroactive, when it is clearly stated on the Resolution that it was dated effective May 26, 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I am making the point that we have to recognise the need to build stronger relationships between Government and public sector workers. We cannot get away from the fact that it undermines our very existence when we look at the disquiet that is apparent within important areas of the public sectors like our nurses, teachers and police officers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard about the special arrangements for officers who died on the job but what about the officers who go to work daily and at nights who constantly put their lives in danger. Recently, we saw a policeman lost his life in the line of duty and the point is not what his family would get but what would the other officers get as they go about their duty because it must have a serious psychological impact on them and we cannot escape from that reality. Mr. Speaker, in spite of what we hear in terms of the statistics, we recognise that the crime situation in Barbados is serious.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of these other issues raised by CTUSAB in the context of the negotiations contain a lot of food for thought like the productivity issue. When the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East introduced the Resolution, she said they were not in a position to have productivity factored into the agreement. Sir, this Government came into power, found the National Productivity Board and changed it to the National Productivity Council in 1996 in order to broaden its remit. It not now only deals with public sector issues but also private sector issues and I give them credit for doing that. Surely, that was seven years ago and something should be received from that organisation to input into salary negotiations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since we are seven years into the life of the National Productivity Council and in the middle of a public sector reform programme, it leaves a few questions about the level work going on in the Ministry of Labour and other institutions.

Sir, I want to deal with the appointment of workers. Honourable Members on the other side thumped the table when it was announced that they appointed all the casual employees. Perhaps that is so but we need to look at both sides of the coin. There is a very strong historical relationship between my constituency

and the hospital. It is not in my the constituency but Martindale(s Road separates my constituency from it and many of my constituents are employed at the hospital. Sir, with the institution of a board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital there is a level of uncertainty among the workers.

Asides.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: The Minister of Health may not want to get rid of anyone but if the workers are insecure about their futures, there is no point in telling them that 4 000 of their colleagues have been appointed. Sir, the same thing will happen when the airport, seaport and the Caves of Barbados are corporatised.

Asides.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: I am saying that it speaks to the issue of security of tenure, to the psychological comfort of the public sector of our country and these are things that we must consider.

H15/17:40

Sequence 41

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. R.L. SEALY Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would not even get into the fact that having regularise these workers, that other workers have been employed on a casual or temporary basis. In fact, some of them were fired in the same manner that they claimed that was no longer possible, after having appointed casual workers.

Sir, what level of comfort does that give to workers at Urban Development Commission who were involved in the debushing programme? The Honourable Member for St.

Michael South East would have my sympathy in that regard. Why were they not appointed? They had to go home as well without any sort of benefits. Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us look at these things in totality.

I do not want to go on at length on the issue of the Senior Minister but I feel that I should say something about that. Sir, if the Prime Minister in his opinion prefers to have someone else as his deputy, well he should do it. Sirs, the Honourable Member for The City is keeping the pay and getting half as much work, because she has an extra Minister in her department and she is getting Senior Minister pay.

Asides

Mr. R.L. SEALY: I think that it has a stench. Let us be frank here, Sir. It has a stench.

Mr. Deputy SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think that you should respect the Honourable Member for The City.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: I was speaking about the policy, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Sir, take for example, the former Prime Minister who represented the constituency of Christ Church South, he served on the frontbench and did work for the Government of Barbados but without pay.

Asides

Mr. R.L. SEALY: I am saying that the Honourable Member for The City can do what she has to do but why must she be paid for a job that she is no longer doing.

Asides

Mr. R.L. SEALY: When the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is relieved as

Minister of Tourism he would find a job as a consultant too.

Mr. Deputy SPEAKER: Honourable Member let us go on.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: The public sector of this country has suffered and has sacrificed to see that this country enjoys times of economic plenty. It is only fair that they should now enjoy some of the benefits. Therefore, I think that the proposal for a tiered system of an increase in salaries is very reasonable and there are several institutions in this country that are in agreement with us.

Sir, with those remarks I state categorically that we are not supporting this Resolution.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me begin by giving my compliments to Government for its consistent approach in dealing with the public workers in this country. I am not convinced by any of the grand standing on the other side of the aisle. The Honourable Members of the Opposition have not honed in on the issues that are before us as they relates to the Resolution, particularly

Honourable Member for St. Lucy and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, who seem to be lost in a sea of inaccuracies as it relates to the economy of Barbados and how things function in Barbados.

We can talk forever but let us get to the context of the debate. Has Government under the circumstances been fair in this settlement as it relates to maintaining the standard of living of the public workers of this country? Can the Government of Barbados at this time afford the increases and can the economy afford these increases at this time? Are we tuned to build the productive sectors of this country to the

point where we can continue to afford the increases? Are we true to what the economic indicators are showing as they relate to the development of the economy of Barbados? Does this settlement create a climate that the public sector will continue to function effectively and efficiently in this day and age? Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are the issues.

Sir, all of this is taken in the context of all of the macroeconomic policies and environment in which this economy is couched. This debate offers to engage in intellectual combat as a Government and Opposition, on where we see this economy going and how we see this particular settlement fitting into the wider development of Barbados.

Sir, when we started to get into personal issues we reduced the debate to a personal level. As far as I am concerned we need to get back to the substance of the debate and speak to the issue of how this particular settlement fits into the overall development of the country,

This Government has been consistent in its approach and in its dealings with the public workers of Barbados. The Opposition needs to make up its mind as to whether the economy is thriving or doing badly. We sat in this Honourable House a few weeks ago, and on the one hand we heard that there was nothing in the Budget for the poor people or for the productive sectors, today we are hearing a totally different tune. We are hearing that the economy is doing well enough that we can afford to pay the public workers of Barbados more and that they support CTUSAB and they listed the members of CTUSAB. They opposed to the settlement but nobody on that side told us how much they would have paid, how they would have paid it and how it would effect the economy of Barbados. Sir, we were told that the economy was in trouble, there were no prospects for any future development of the economy, the productive sectors were

not performing and that the Government(s) policies could never improve them and everything was off but the Opposition could not advance any suggestions as to how to improve the productive sectors.

The wage increases that we are outlining...

H15: 17.50 p.m.

Sequence 42

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

5:50 p.m.

Continuation of Hon. N.A. LYNCH:

Sir, it is clearly seen that the wage increases have outstripped all of the inflation rates, both at the bottom and top for the past seven to eight years. The Opposition wants to paint a constant picture of a suffering populace in Barbados. Every time we hear the Leader of the Opposition speaks, we hear about how much people in Barbados are suffering.

We hear the Honourable Member for St. Philip West again, saying how much the poor people in Barbados are suffering. I would like to know, Sir, where are all those poor people who are suffering?

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, the former Leader of the Opposition met the poor people when he was coming to the debate. The present Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, met a nurse on his way to the debate. They all meet these poor people. Sir, I would like to know where in the country, are these people who are suffering. I am sure that even now on 16th December, and you go into Bridgetown, you would see where the money is, see if you could get through Broad

Street with all these people who are poor and suffering.

Sir, all of sudden the Democratic Labour Party has become a caring Party for the people of Barbados. I remember a time under this same Democratic Labour Party where people in Barbados were sent home. This is the same party where people lost all their jobs. This is the same party under which all the people loss their houses. This is the same party under which everybody had to cash in their insurance policies.

Sir, since 1994 the public works of Barbados have been better off under this administration, than they have ever been at any time in their existence. Let me say, that this Government was forthright and caring as to ensure security of tenure for workers where the status of a casual employee does not exist anymore. We converted the status of a casual employee into public workers. This is a Government that legislated not to cut workers salaries ever again in Barbados. This is an administration that sought to look after the welfare of the public workers. I say, metaphorically, that the blood of the public workers of Barbados are on the hands of the Democratic Labour Party and will always be on the hands of the Democratic Labour Party and I have to remind them because they would like us to forget.

Sir, I remember during the years of 1992 to 1994 in this country that a lot of lawyers who did conveyancing almost went bankrupt. This is the legacy that the Democratic Labour Party left with us.

I say that the Democratic Labour Party has no moral authority to speak on issues relating to public workers(salaries in this country. Sir, it is a party of salary cuts, not a party of salary increases. This is a party that would go to the highest court in the land to try to cut poor people salaries. I am telling you that there are a

lot of people who come in here and would like to drive the bandwagon as the champion for the poor people of this country, but they are at the helm of cutting people salaries.

Sir, when I consider that these people would have gone the length and breadth of Barbados, trying to make poor people poorer, it tells me something about the quality of men on That Side. I cannot even say women because there are no women sitting on that side. They do nothing at all to (big up) women. They would not even put one in the Senate.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, women in Barbados are carrying these households and caring children. They say that women raise men and they do not have anything at all to say for women. Could you imagine a party could run an election, win seven seats and then send two people to the Senate, and could not find a woman at all to send anywhere to prove anything.

This is the Democratic Labour Party who comes to tell us how much they care about poor people in Barbados. I say, Sir, the most important issue in this debate...

Sir, the Leader of the Opposition was good enough to acknowledge that the productive sector that is firing on all cylinders is the tourism sector.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, I draw the distinction of what has been happening all along. When they first came here, the tourism sector, like all of the other productive sectors, was suffering and doing badly. Therefore, none of the policies that we were putting in place were able at any level to prop up these productive sectors or to make them continue to

work.

Sir, when we come to the issue of salary revision and increases, all of a sudden, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West say that the other sectors may not be doing as well, and the only sector that we have to look forward to in this country now, is tourism.

I want to say also that a number of the policies which were outlined during the Budget debate, were not only focussed upon looking at the productive sectors but also repositioning those sectors collectively, in the face of the wider economic challenges to Barbados.

Sir, I say that giving agriculture a new lease on life, in essence is a vote of confidence for the tourism sector. We hear everyone talk, particularly the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, about the community tourism, and what he would do and what he would not do. Sir, there are a number of programmes which are going on within Ministries, particularly in the Ministry of Agriculture and Tourism that seek to create better linkages between the two sectors.

We have initiatives such as the Black Belly Sheep that we have been pioneering, along with the Ministry of Agriculture. This creates a much better basis for tourism and agriculture to be linked together. Sir, we are able to create a basis on which the manufacturing sector, the international business sector and the agricultural sector can thrive, as outlined in the Budget. What this has done, is give tourism, particularly, a better opportunity to survive and thrive in this new environment.

Sir, one of the biggest problems that we face within the tourism sector is the issue of input cost to the sector. If you are able to reposition the other productive sectors of the economy, in a way that they function efficiently, what you

would do is create a better basis for the functioning of tourism as well. This is the point we sought to emphasise the entire Budget debate, in terms of setting the stage of what is about to come.

House 16, sequence 43, 18:0014

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. N. A. LYNCH:

I am calling upon the Opposition to tell me what it is about tourism that is not doing well. Sir, they are going to go up to the airport to meet Continental Airlines. Sir, more people are playing in this tourism environment than ever before.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, the ability of the public sector to continually function effectively and efficiently is at the core of what this debate is about. The ability to maintain an efficient service sector is important and it needs to be led by the public service of Barbados. How we regulate the service sector in future would be critical to our existence. Sir, in all of the multilateral trading negotiations that are going on, which are key to our future and which will cause a lot of pain and suffering, we will need a cadre of qualified and competent civil servants to be at the core of any efforts to stir a new approach to service sector development in this country.

The workers(representative, the National Union of Public Workers has agreed to the settlement. The Government has been clear to state how the same would affect its estimates and budget. I heard the Opposition speak and in all of the issues they have outlined, they have not told us what they would have paid. I keep hearing that the people at the bottom of the scale, at the Z-38 scale, received a little

over \$80. Sir, anybody who understands how pay scales are constructed would know that there is only X amount of people at the top and that the base gets broader at the bottom as you go along, so, how can someone expect us to give everybody at the bottom of the scale \$10 000 more. To argue a point as ridiculous as that says something about the people we are dealing with.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, the Leader of the Opposition has not told us at any level what he would pay and how it would affect Government(s revenue. The public workers of this country can clearly see that they are being included in the growth the country is making. The public workers are not (raising cane(over some of the issues that I see the Opposition (raising cane(over. I am convinced that the public workers in Barbados are more interested in how they are going to continue at this level.

Sir, the Opposition cannot prove at any level that the standard of living of any of the public workers in Barbados has been eroded by this particular settlement. I keep hearing all these loose utterings that the standard of living of the public workers of Barbados has diminished, but there is no empirical evidence to substantiate that.

When the Leader of the Opposition was closing his presentation, he spent a long time speaking to issues relating to how the small service providers in Barbados are suffering and how their standard of living has been eroded. Sir, no other government in the history of Barbados has taken specific steps to deal with issues relating to the small businessmen in Barbados than has been done by this administration.

Sir, every time this Government does something that speaks to pushing the small

businessmen and small providers up, the Opposition opposes it, contradicts it and jumps up and down. That is the kind of hypocrisy that exists in this Chamber particularly on that side.

The formation of Fund Access has created over 500 new small business people in Barbados. Sir, apart from the loans and the subvention that was given to the Small Business Development Fund, this Government was able to give a small subvention for marketing to the small hoteliers of Barbados.

Sir, there are over 300 small contractors that were created in Barbados under the Urban Development Commission. Sir, sometimes I have to wonder whose side the Opposition is on. The Opposition comes in here riding the wave and presenting themselves as being the champions of poor people in Barbados, but every initiative that the Government takes that seeks to deal with issues of being able to lift up the small man or the small businessman in Barbados, is put down by the Opposition.

Sir, in everything there is good and bad. Do you believe, Sir, that you can create a whole cadre of new small enterprises in Barbados without somebody slipping through the cracks or without something happening that is not always above board? The Opposition is going to focus on one particular incident or on a couple of contractors who supposedly got something they should not get and make that the order of the day. I heard the Leader of the Opposition and the former Leader of the Opposition talking about reserving a level of contracts in Barbados for small business providers at a certain level, but when the Ministry of Social Transformation tries to deal with it, it is condemned by the Leader of the Opposition.

Sir, the people of Barbados know very well what has happened under the existence of these two administrations. The public servants of

Barbados are well clear about who has been looking after their welfare at the time, who has been the most diligent and the most sensible and who has been the most sincere at doing it. Sir, this Government has looked after the public servants of our country in a manner that is fitting and respectful of what they contribute to the development of our country. The public servants are well aware of the contribution they are making and they are well aware of how this Government is treating them. They spoke on May 21st and they are going to have a chance to speak again and when they do, I suspect that once again they would endorse the people who they know are looking after their welfare and their future. The standard of living of the public servants of this country has not been eroded.

Sir, I commend this Resolution for the settlement to the House and give compliments and endorsement to the Government of Barbados.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, amiss all the hubris, drama and the theatre of Parliament, which comes from the other side, we have to be constantly aware that we are speaking about persons living in Barbados today and that these Resolutions which are before us will impact on them in some substantial way. As I speak to these Resolutions, as possibly one of the only persons in this Chamber who has had some experience in dealing with salary negotiations and other industrial relation issues, I would wish to address some of those concerns which were enunciated by the leaders of the trade union movement over the nine months or so that these negotiations were going on.

House 15 Sequence 44

6:10 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. R. D. JONES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I recognise that the Honourable Members on the Government side are extremely happy with the increases which are being given to the public servants of Barbados. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can say that because they constantly applaud themselves when they raise the issue of the three-year agreement which is calibrated with a 2 per cent in the first year; a 3 per cent in the second, and a 3 per cent in the third year, which would conclude that particular agreement.

Sir, the question has been asked by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South as to where are the poor people of Barbados. The poor people of Barbados are all around us and we must not run from that fact. If we do, we would not create policies or programmes which would alleviate those difficult circumstances in which many of our people find themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have both the unemployed poor and the working poor in Barbados. I am sure that the Honourable Members on the Other Side, particularly the Honourable Member who has last spoken, would have remembered that the Honourable Prime Minister has spoken to the extent of poverty in this country. I do not know if he was speaking of Culpepper Island or of Pelican Island, but I know that he was speaking of this 166 square mile rock, on which we all reside. Therefore, let us not run from this issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not believe that a 2, 3, 4, or 10 per cent, would remove some of the poverty, if it is in the private sector or the public sector, from among the unemployed or the working poor. In fact, there must be more penetrative policies to impact on the overall livelihood of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not caught up with

the thumping or throwing up in the air of who works or does not work for \$110 000 or \$178 000. I believe that, at the end of the day in this House, we must remove ourselves from the blatant hypocrisy which we practise on the Floor but when all of us go to the Members' room, we can say that we are not properly remunerated. We say that. We also say that there is a need for overall improvements, and that those persons who come to public office should benefit in a better way than they are currently benefiting. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this hypocrisy must stop. It is ridiculous. We must find a mechanism to reward the people of Barbados, including persons in this House and in the Other Place, for their work and contribution to the development of this country.

Let us understand that, in truth in fact, we have not yet found a formula to give a man or a woman the right type of reward for his or her labour. Therefore, this behavior, jumping up and the hypocrisy of tongue and language, particularly that which was spouted by a young man who was possibly given the best education in this country, for him to stand and to talk the kind of verbiage, when one recognises that it is only an intellectual exercise, with no heart being put into this matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is an offence to me and it should be an offence to all those who work in the schools in this country, either now removed or receiving their salaries for which they have a just reward. It is foolishness and we need to stop it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that when the people of Barbados listen to this or when they read about it, that as long as the journalists are able to capture the essence, they would recognise that a lot of it does not bear anything to their reality nor to their conditions but to the drama and masquerading of a person who cried crocodile tears and wipe dry eyes. It must stop and a sense of seriousness must prevail what

we do when we say we are placed here to work in the best interest of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, somehow we seem to be convinced that this debate is about the perennial increase in salaries and with the idea that negotiations have taken place, where one group proposes, while the other counters and that we are caught up in a ritualistic orgy of numbers, played out over longer and longer periods, reported intermittently in the media, while the workers retreat more and more from the process. It is a serious dilemma.

Trade unions are hemorrhaging because the workers that they say are their members, no longer feel confident nor comfortable in listening to their voices, and that frightens me. We have to watch what is happening. The hemorrhaging that is taking place and the alienation from the process would eventually break their backs and this tripartite relationship and the social contract and agenda, would come to naught. Therefore, all the work that many of us would have put in, in the early 1990s, to construct a basis of Social Partnership would be cast out and abandoned by those persons who do not understand the situation that we have.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, negotiations in Barbados seem to have become a dance by some of the major players such as civil service managers working on the behalf of the Government and trade union leaders, working ostensibly in the best interest of workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this debate is not only about what goes on upstairs at the Barbados Workers Union (BWU) or across Bay Street, it is about the rights and responsibility of the workers. It is about fair reward for their output. It is about a Government employer who recognises the worth and value of those workers. I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. James North would have aligned himself with these comments. Mr.

Speaker, it is about the industrial relations practices of the Government/employer, and how that entity interfaces with the trade union representatives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, today thousands of Government workers do not care about the 2-3-3 percentage increase. When it is broken down, it is near trifle. Let me give you an example to substantiate my point, and I am going to use teachers as an example, because they are grossly underpaid. They have taught some of us in here but unfortunately from the level of behavior of some, one wonders, if, in fact, those persons have received any good teaching.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a trained teacher in the first year, at the gross level, would have received \$507.01, which is \$47.51 per month. Sir, that has nothing to do with the income tax and other Government impositions that would come out of it, such as National Insurance, which would increase sometime or has now gone up.

House No.15(45)6:20 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. R.D. JONES:

When we talk about these things, it is meaningless because what workers truly want is a mass array of policies so that at the end of the day when they see their take home pay, they know what they can do with it and plan their lives accordingly.

Sir, public servants truly want to be treated fairly in their jobs because they want to enjoy working at the various work places. They do not want to be victimized, harassed or shunted from pillar to post. They want to be in a position to give advice and carry out their job without fear of ridicule or being treated in a contemptuous manner. If Honourable

Members on the other side listen carefully, they would recognise that many civil servants who work along with them feel dissatisfied by the level of treatment given to them by political bosses, from time to time and how they place their friends before them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we truly need increase levels of job satisfaction among public workers where they are assessed as professionals and not as creatures of Ministers, afraid to act because they are intimidated into silence, while the political bosses rule supreme and do whatever they like. These bosses waste large amounts of money on ill-conceived and badly implemented projects which now lay decaying right across the length and breadth of Barbados. It is a phenomenal waste of taxpayers' money.

Sir, within those circumstances, public servants cannot be given a rational increase. Therefore, they have to practise divide and rule, set one trade union against the other, trade union solidarity goes down the drain and it is the workers who suffer the most.

Within the current industrial relationship climate, carefully and deliberately orchestrated by this Government, the whole notion of trade union solidarity has been so fractured that when one calls, other might not rise to the occasion to go to their assistance. It is a severe slap in the face of what we essentially tried to build in the last 10 years. This can only be characterised as one-upmanship, which was spoken about by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

In my memory, I am not aware of any trade union being given a particular package while the others are given something else. To protect the notion of solidarity, I hope the unions would link their hands together and be united in the face of the avalanche which is coming on the backs of some of them.

The principle of trade union solidarity must

not be sacrificed on the altar of ego or on whom agrees with Government first but they should act together to promote common principles and issues to better the livelihood of people they represent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this posture is not about destabilising the country of Barbados because none of us on this side or the public workers of Barbados would want to destabilise the economy of Barbados because we all live here and to do anything to destabilise or fracture the economy of Barbados is not within our best interest. It is, therefore, wrong for Honourable Members on the side of Government to suggest otherwise.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, CTUSAB, an umbrella body formed in the early 1990s arose out of the difficulties of that period and I stand here proud as one of the original framers of the constitution of CTUSAB, signing on the dotted line, committing at that time the Barbados Union of Teachers (BUT) to that organisation. Sir, there were many years before we were able to get an umbrella body and I reject any attempt by anybody to destabilise that institution in this particular period when one now sees more synergy among the employers.

People seem to want the workers to be scattered to the winds, to be picked off one by one but those in the trade union movement who do not understand this should stop receiving their pay from the workers they claim to represent. They should reside in some other clime, as workers cannot be satisfied paying but not receiving the type of effective representation that is important to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a situation where a large number of public servants cannot make ends meet and they are moonlighting. Police have to moonlight in Barbados because if you consider the salary paid for hazardous jobs, one would recognise

that it is a joke and this is why people do not come forward to police the streets in Barbados. Sir, Barbadians do not want to work at two or three jobs. They would be happy to work one job as long as they are able to make ends meet and satisfy their needs and the needs of their family.

H15/18:30

Sequence 46

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. R.D. JONES They have to moon light. I am not talking about those who are also moonlighting.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke about those who are moonlighting so I cannot speak about them. I am sure that many of them are his friends and therefore he would know what they do when they confer with him in the quietude of their homes and at their parties. Therefore, when he speaks to this, he speaks with a degree of honesty but I cannot speak to it because I am not in the crowd. I am not invited to those places.

Asides

Mr. R.D. JONES: I am very careful of the friends that I keep. I love cassava, yam, eddoes and I would add to it (proper pork) because those of us who come from the country understand what is good food. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you would like some soft dumplings placed on the side, that is your desire.

Asides

Mr. R.D. JONES: I applauded the posture of CTUSAB, Barbados Union of Teachers and those organisations mentioned by the

Honourable Member for St. Philip North, who having been introduced to a new dimension in the salary arrangement, the three-year agreement, needed time to acquaint its membership and to understand the impact of such an agreement, demanded more time. I support that posture.

We are now being asked to come to Parliament to get involved with the legislation of salaries. Even though the National Union of Public Workers hierarchy agreed with the position, a large segment of the trade union movement could not have agreed with the position at the time. Maybe they would have arrived at an agreement but I do not know.

It is not that I do not want the public servants of Barbados to get their 2,3,3. None of us are in a position to say that we do not want that, so we are not to be caught up in the grandstanding stupidity that is going to emanate from the Other Side. We want workers to receive their money. In fact, if the negotiation could have been concluded at the end of April this year and workers had their money we would have applauded that.

I cannot in all conscience support a process of truncated negotiations. I am supporting the increase for workers but I will never support the truncated negotiated process by a Government who seems always to be in a hurry. Workers were not marching up and down the streets demanding the money and if you are familiar with the workers of Barbados, they will march. I marched proudly.

Asides

Mr. R.D. JONES: I was at the forefront and the pictures speak loudly. As a trade union leader I stand on principle, no apology to anybody. I am a man. Some ran and hid and others sat on the other side because they are comfortable with their buttered bread but those

of us who come from the nigger yard of yesterday know how it is to sweat, shake the cane piece and pick at the potato slip. We do not have to be ostentatious. We do not have to do that but as blood flows through our veins we will always do that which is right.

Where has the honour gone in all of this process? Where are the examples that the Government of Barbados would want to set for wider society? For the hundreds of private sector employers who go every day who sit with some representative of The Barbados Workers Union? Where is the kind of honour and integrity in the process that would persuade public service managers who deal with issues every day with the National Union of Public Workers, Barbados Union of Teachers, Barbados Secondary Teachers Union or prison? How are they going to respond because they take the standard from the Government?

Asides

Mr. R.D. JONES: Maybe that is why the Honourable Member for St. Michael South said that there are no poor people in Barbados. He squealed (where are they) in a loud and contentious voice. He has never seen one of them but we had to remind him that is very possible because he is not found on the ground in St. Michael South. He is not out there interfacing with the people. I interface with many of them so they tell me.

Asides

Mr. R.D. JONES: We need to look at the economic profile of those members because they have large pockets that are always filled. They do not have to moonlight because many of them have legitimate businesses. It is not the amount of money that they receive because they have legitimate businesses, they are entrepreneurs and are working. I have no quarrel with that. I want to see a lot more

people being employed. I am not complaining.

Sir, when the Representative for Christ Church West opens the doors to his apartments, there are constructed by carpenters, masons, electricians and other artisans of Barbados. The others on that side that have done the same thing, I do not have any quarrel with that but in the meantime your purses are becoming larger while the purses of others dwindle under the policies and impact of the Government.

Sir, the question is asked, (What would you have offered?) I am comfortable with a two-year salary arrangement, maybe, that is part of the conservative nature that I have. I am also comfortable with a fair increase. In the trade union movement during the 1970s and 1980s we were saying that we need to narrow the gap between the top level workers and those at the bottom and a lot of policies were put in place to achieve that because all the workers shop at the same places.

I have not seen the Government establish corner shops which say that those who work for \$15 000 a year can shop there because they can get cheaper prices there. We all shop at the same places.

H15: 18.40

Sequence 47

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

6:40 p.m.

Continuation of Mr. R.D. JONES:

There are some on the Other Side who do not even shop in Barbados, because they have access to airplanes, so they can pack their

barrels with the goodies of this life and send them back. There are others in the wider community who do that as well, so do not let us pretend that this is not so, even if it is to host parties for their constituents.

I want to see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the medical scheme established for workers. Right now, many workers pay for a medical scheme, so we can work out some arrangement for that. We need that. I want to see the second Deputy Principal in secondary schools, which was called for more than 14 years ago.

Aside.

Mr. R.D. JONES: I want to see the Deputy Principal in primary schools, promised in the classification of 1989 which was not delivered, procrastination.

I also want to take a look at the Customs Department where many of the workers refer to as Hollywood. I am aware that there have been recent appointments, but they have not been any for such a long time and we need to see more appointments. I want to see an acceleration in the appointment of workers and do not only tap yourself on the appointment of casual workers. I compliment that position, which must be supported. I also want to see the timely payment of workers who do overtime, so that they do not have to wait five and six months after they work.

I want to see serious approaches, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to occupational health and safety in the work places across the public sector. I want to see sick building syndrome dealt urgently, as a matter of policy. The medical people on this side and that side would recognise what I am talking about. I want to see workers in hazardous jobs get safety equipment. It is important that all of these things become part and parcel of the overall package and do not let us become persuaded that it is about 2-3-3

because that is not the issue.

Sir, let us work in here for the delivery of the public workers of Barbados, so that they can join senior civil servants in Barbados in truly developing this country, because that development is important if we are to survive as a nation and as a people. We speak in here of the approaching globalisation issues of the CSME, FTAA and the opening of the Barbadian market wider, but we are not preparing the people and the workers of Barbados to stand united, focussed and deliberate in our attempts to protect the survival of Barbadians.

I therefore join my colleagues on this side, in not supporting this particular Resolution because it stands against the grain and mentality which have been fostered over the years. This truncating of a negotiating process is a travesty.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not intend to speak long in this debate, because a number of Honourable Members have spoken on this side, and on the other side, but I still need to put some records straight.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is new to the House but he is not new to political life. He has been the member of the Democratic Labour Party as far as I can remember, maybe for 20 years, because we were teachers together. He was a member of the Democratic Labour Party and I was a member of the BLP. He is not new to unionism either. I recall that it was during the period 1993 when the Democratic Labour Party had a problem with managing the economy and we marched through Bridgetown with the unions, he did not march with us.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a

pont of order. The Honourable Member is grossly misleading the House. In fact, if he would check the historical records, he would find out that this Honourable Member, not only marched but spoke on the platforms mounted by the Coalition of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados. Sir, that absence of knowledge, must not be allowed to perpetrate or permeate Barbados. Those who were there, knew who were there, and that is important.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we would not prolong the debate. The records will show. I remember in those days that I checked everything for the Leader of the Opposition. You did not vote or sign and let me also say that you lost the presidency of the union, precisely because you did not march...

Mr. R.D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. History is not the forte of the Honourable Member for St. George North. He does not understand facts, because this Honourable Member never lost one election in the Barbados Union of Teachers. In fact, this Honourable Member resigned in September of 1995 to proceed to the University of London to do his master(s degree).

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member did not vote with the Government. I am saying further that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central who is a unionist by profession, as well as a teacher, should know better.

We are aware that under the Democratic Labour Party, the wage increases that they give between 1986 and 1994 were very minimal. In terms of pension increases, the Democratic Labour Party gave a \$6 increase in eight years, so they should not talk. I am saying further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Democratic Labour Party must not get away with this. Can

you imagine that they are saying that the Government must give \$10 000 across the board...

Aside.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West said that he would give \$10 000 across the board. The fact is that the Democratic Labour Party intends to put this country at risk.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Again, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because he has a problem with facts. He has a problem with short term memory as well. I spoke only a few minutes ago, and at no time in my submission to this Honourable House, I made any indication of how much I would give. I do not know where the Honourable Member got that piece of information.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Members on That Side would want to destroy the economy of this country. The Barbadian workers are aware that the Government can only give what we can, at this point in time. We are giving increases, we are not taking any wages from anybody. The Dems have been noted traditionally for cutting wages. Furthermore, I heard an Honourable Member on That Side say that we are noted for legislating salaries.

House 17, sequence 48, 18:5014

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

The very first party that legislated salaries in this country was the Democratic Labour Party. Under the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow,

the Democratic Labour Party legislated salaries in 1974.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the unions have agreed that the workers of this country want their money. They do not want any (long talk). Nobody is marching today. Mr. Deputy Speaker, persons are out there shopping in Bridgetown because they have money. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the credit unions have over \$568 million in savings. This is a 16 per cent increase between 1999 and 2000, so people are saving money. The credit unions are (washed) in savings.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbadians are happier today with the Barbados Labour Party than they were with the Democratic Labour Party. The Democratic Labour Party cannot now come in here and pretend that they are looking after the workers of Barbados. Barbadians do not want to hear them. We just had an election in which the people of this country have voted for the Barbados Labour Party as the Government of this country because they know that we can look after their interest. We are not sending home people. I have made the point already that before the Democratic Labour Party can even think about forming the government again they must come and apologise to the people of this country.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member for St. John and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy were the ones who were in here between the period 1994 and 1999, so the other Honourable Members can be excused. The two of them are the ones who voted that they would cut salaries again. They have to understand that the country will never forgive them for that.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Yes, you were the ones who voted against the Constitutional amendment.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member on what point do you rise?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House referring to Honourable Members as you. As you know, Sir, no one is allowed to refer to anybody in this House as you.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. John and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy were the two Honourable Members who were here during the period 1994 to 2000 and they were the ones who voted in the Constitutional amendment to cut salaries.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that there were only two Honourable Members in this House that agreed to that particular debate. The Honourable Member is attacking one of his own comrades, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, and he does not even understand that he is doing that.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the people of Barbados are happier today and they want their money. Wherever I go, people are asking me when they are going to get their increase and their arrears of salaries.

Nobody is talking about the pensions or salaries of the Members of Parliament. There are Honourable Members in here who continuously attacks the payment that we get.

Asides.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John is not speaking in the debate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Allow me to hear the Honourable Member, please. Proceed Honourable Member.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John is interrupting this debate and I want him to get up and speak and say what he would have given the workers of this country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as far as I am concerned and as far as Barbadians are concerned, they are better off today than they were under the Democratic Labour Party administration.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North is breaching a number of Standing Orders. The first Standing Order is relevance. The second one is that not only is he saying that he said before which means he is repeating a previous speech he delivered but he is saying what other people said before, which means that he is repeating speeches that they delivered which must be a breach of the Standing Orders, Sir. The third point is that the Honourable Member is anticipating the House because he is saying that I am about to say something that I have not even determine whether I am going to say it. That is at least three Standing Orders he has been breaching so far in this debate.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member who just sat has refused to speak and help his colleagues. He needs to get up and help his colleagues and at least guide them in this debate, but he is not going to help them tonight because he realised that all of them are not in tune with what is going on in the country.

The Honourable Member for St. John is well aware that the public servants of this country want their money and he does not want the (long talk). He wants to go home because he realised that the people of this country are happy that they are getting the increase. He is aware of what is happening in St. Lucia, Jamaica, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago where the workers are not getting increases tonight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a Government that is prepared to negotiate with the unions. The largest public workers(union of this country has agreed to the settlement and we are happy about that. We are also happy that the workers of this country are happy that they are getting their increase. The workers of this country are happy tonight and I know that the Honourable Member is happy too.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Asides.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. A couple minutes ago, I was speaking to the good medical doctor beside me, to whom I was complaining of not feeling well. After hearing the contribution from the Honourable Member for St. George North, I certainly would have to consult the good doctor again because I was not impressed with it. If I were to describe the contribution that was made by the Honourable Member for St. George North, I would classify it as diatribe and I would say he gave a magnificent display in the exercise of confusion.

House 15 Sequence 49

7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. M. A. LASHLEY:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member had the audacity to ask the Democratic Labour Party to apologise, when a number of weeks ago, in a debate in this Chamber, the Honourable Member for St. George South, in his own team, was pleading and crying out to him, and asking for his merciful hands to touch the low income earners in St. George South.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member had the audacity to get up in this House and to ask us to apologise. I will show the relevance.

Sir, I sat and listened to the speaker for St. James Central, and I was asked to give a description of his speech. The Honourable Member reminded me of a spin bowler trying to bowl fast, and was all over the wicket. It was a description of fluff.

Mr. Speaker, I would not even mention the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, who seems to have a problem with seeing poor people.

Mr. Speaker, this debate speaks about equity and fairness for workers in this country. It speaks about respect and due recognition for the workers(representatives in this country. Sir, clearly it involves the notion of justice and fairness for public workers in this country.

Mr. Speaker, when we speak about the Ministry of Labour, I have a Barbados Labour Party(s Manifesto, 1994, in my possession. At one page, I see a particular individual who was charged with the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, who is now politically dead, a good

friend of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Mr. Speaker, when we speak about salaries, this debate encapsulates the terms and conditions of workers in this country. At page 22, they said that they would legislate a comprehensive Employment Protections Act and would modernise all labour laws in this country.

Mr. Speaker, what benefit has the Ministry of Labour derived from any of the programmes of this Government? Sir, the workers in this country would certainly be asking where is the Employment Protections Act that was so promised, to improve the lot of workers in this country.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Bring the legislation to this House. I challenge you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, if this Government is articulating in this Honourable Chamber that they were so good to workers and have been looking out for the interest of workers, then where is the legislation? Where is the protection for workers in this country?

Mr. Speaker, that is not all, there are the Unfair Dismissal Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. A number of weeks ago, there was a problem in the Registration Department, where workers were crying out for better conditions. In fact, on a number of occasions, as I journeyed to the courtyard to go into the courtroom, I saw workers in the yard on strike because of the working conditions at the Registration Department. Sir, that was a good time for the Ministry of Labour to look at pushing this legislation, so as to protect the workers at the Registration Department.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all, I have heard the Honourable Member for St. James Central, mentioning about the police officers and the conditions of their work. Sir, that is not true because as one journeys to a number of police stations in this country, one hears of police officers complaining about their working conditions. As one journeys to District C, (the police officers ask when would they be getting enough vehicles to carry out their work properly, efficiently and effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I must ask where is the legislation, because this encapsulates the terms and conditions of the workers in this country. Mr. Speaker, what is also disheartening and disgraceful is the fact that the Government has come to a decision when there are other workers who have not had the opportunity to make any representation.

Mr. Speaker, I am respectfully submitting that it is an insult and a disgrace to the collective bargaining process. Sir, one collective union that represents teachers, fire officers, prison officers, police officers, primary and secondary schools, principals, et cetera, was asking for time to put its case. What does that say for the process of collective bargaining, for the whole concept of the freedom of association, and for the rights of workers in this country?

Mr. Speaker, we hear talk and hot air from the Other Side that the Democratic Labour Party did not look after the rights of the workers. Can they bring the record that would tell us or would make us feel, with some degree of certainty, that they have the interest of workers on this country at heart?

Mr. Speaker, tonight I respectfully ask, what is the position of the workers at the end of the scale?

House No.15(50) 7:10 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Mr. M.A. LASHLEY:

Is the Honourable Member St. George North happy because they are poor people in his constituency? The Honourable Member St. George South indicated that he would not ask anyone to vote for the Barbados Labour Party next general elections.

Asides.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: It is on record because he said it in this House. I want to submit that the Government has paid lip service to the labour movement and workers in this country. What are the labour movement and workers getting from this Government? Sir, that question must be answered. We want to know because Government should see itself as the model employer.

Mr. Speaker, we are questioning the quantum and procedure because other public servants were left out. The Government is on record as saying that police officers are not special. I am not surprised or moved by the position of this Government with regard to the good police officers in this country.

Mr. Speaker, Government should create a decent working environment for workers in this country. There is an increase in wages but also one in National Insurance contribution. Sir, the Government gives with one hand and takes back with the other hand. When we speak about equity, fairness and justice for workers I am reminded of the saying: (He who seeks equity, must do equity.) The Government must come with clean hands with regard to pensioners, janitors, police officers, teachers and other public servants.

Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest that we now have to widen the gap. I speak from my heart for the low income earners in this country. I have to be emotional and passionate about it because I come from a humble working class and I have an obvious connection with those persons. Sir, the underprivileged and disadvantaged must be treated fairly in this country because Government is in a position to do whatever necessary and they should not simply sit idly in Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to ask about the job evaluation exercise and why there is so much secrecy about it. We want to be given some information in relation to the job evaluation exercise and to hear something about public reform in this country.

Mr. Speaker, it is my humble and respectful submission that the workers in this country have not received a fair deal from this administration. There were two Ministers of Labour and not one single piece of legislation has been passed. We on this side respectfully asked this administration to put what is necessary in place for the workers who are now on a journey for equity and fairness from this administration.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring closure to this Resolution and to say to you that this matter has seen many contributions on many sides. I have tried to distill out of the posturing those things which will inure to the benefit of the people of Barbados as we move forward in the process of governance.

Recognising that I might still be the youngest person in this Chamber but one who has had the benefit of twelve years of parliamentary experience between both Houses, may I say that it is unfortunate that we continue to see a

level of posturing that may be approximated to Honourable Members seeking to cut their teeth on the backs of the public of Barbados, in circumstances where the only certain result is to receive the level of apathy and cynicism in the institution of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we would use the upcoming period of rest that I will announce before the end of the night to reflect on whether we are truly properly serving the interest of the people of Barbados in advancing the discussions in a meaningful way, minus the posturing that has been associated with this debate.

H15/19:20

Sequence 51

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY
We are here today because in this country we have developed a process whereby salary negotiations are undertaken on a periodic basis. Since the mid 1970s we have moved to a two-year accord and we have done so largely because in the middle of the 1970s the level of inflation ranged from 12 per cent to 40 per cent, such that it would was determined by the workers(representatives and the Government that we could not in any certain plan properly if we stuck to three-year accords because of the volatility of inflation in those days.

Mr. Speaker, we have enjoyed a level of relative stability in respect to our inflation rate as well as a low inflation rate, in circumstances where other countries have not benefited from thew same. It has been the judgement of this Government, accepted by the National Union of Public Workers, discussed with the Congress of Trade Union and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB), who even by their

counter offer on the table, spoke to a three-year settlement, that it is in the best interest of the country to treat to these matters over that longer period of time to allow for a greater degree of certainty in our capacity to plan and assure our expenditure management, and to be able to give more time to treat to other issues pertaining to human resource development outside of the context of wage increases.

Mr. Speaker, I say this because Barbados is seeking to become the smallest developed society by the end of this decade. It is almost anticipated that there are certain things that will attract posturing, such as elections and wage negotiations. However, at the end of the day those things really reflect a snapshot in time and take away from our ability to move forward with a degree of seriousness in advancing the overall interest of the country.

I want to urge that we recognise that there is no one in this country, I believe, that would wish to return to the awful days of the early 1990s, for whatever reason. Mr. Speaker, when we sought to amend the Constitution of Barbados we did two things. One, we expressed our desire that the public servants of this country should never have to bear the brunt of adjustment in difficult economic times again but, secondly, we expressed in our deliberate judgement that we should have the confidence in ourselves to manage this economy in a way that would not allow us the flexibility of a policy option of wage cuts.

Mr. Speaker, this is a precept to which this Government remains committed. I trust that those on the other side might have found today an appropriate opportunity to distance themselves from the unfortunate vote when their Party determined that it was expedient for them to oppose an amendment to the Constitution in respect of the Government's ability to enforce wage cuts.

Sir, five of the Honourable Members on that side were not Members of the Opposition at the time. Therefore, one cannot seek to condemn them and crucify them on the same cross. I thought that they would have availed themselves of the opportunity to distance themselves from that unfortunate vote which in my view when combined with the fact that the Democratic Labour Party, in the early 1990s, chose to award itself a salary increase as Ministers of Government in circumstances when not a soul in this country was to benefit from a similar increase. Sir, when those two factors were combined, I wanted to believe that we were seeing the emergence of a new Democratic Labour Party in this Chamber.

Sir, therefore, if I have regret, it is that regret and I hope that I am mistaken. I hope that the Honourable Members would use some other opportunity in the near future to distance themselves from that backward stance and not just to speak of the need for workers' rights to be protected but walk the walk and not just talk the talk.

There are things that a Barbados Labour Party administration would have done in the 1970s that I would have difficulty associating with today. So, there is no crime in distancing oneself from policies that may have been retrogressive. I do believe that as we embark on the early years of this 21st Century, there are certain things that we need to treat to differently.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Leader of the Opposition speak in terms that I thought that he would have sought to cast a new form of leadership on the Democratic Labour Party and distance himself from those days. Alas, we are still awaiting his stamp of leadership on a Party that is bucking worse than a horse that has yet been tamed.

Mr. Speaker, we have come here, as is the

custom, to legislate. I intimated in my opening remarks that it would have been desirable that both unions accept the proposals that were accepted by one but it has become almost the culture that one accepts and then the next rejects. It was on only one occasion, in nine years, have we seen unanimity between the unions of Barbados in relation to this.

Sir, I believe the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central adverted to this in his speech that this may portend more for the unions themselves than for anyone else and to see why there cannot be a greater level of cooperation and synchronisation in position, in seeking to ensure that we do not find ourselves in this unfortunate position in the future.

Sir, I insist that this Government has taken the decisions not only in the interest of the workers but also in the interest in maintaining a fiscally prudent climate, recognising that it is not our intention to take this country where it was ten years ago. Mr. Speaker, recognising that we have a responsibility at the same time that we are treating to increases of public servants salaries to refer to the other things, all of which have a financial cost, the approved terms and conditions.

Sir, the question of increased disposable income by reason of the personal income tax amendments and the improved disposable income for those who happened to be public servants and own property in respect of the adjustments to the land tax rates. We almost forget how difficult it was for public servants to see and secure improvements in their terms and conditions prior to the decade of the 1990s, because there has been a swiftness and a flurry of activity on the part of this Government to treat the concerns of public servants.

Mr. Speaker, all has not been accomplished but I do believe that we have gone a long way in improving the terms and conditions of

workers. Even in respect of the occupational health and safety issues, raised by my friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, there have been improvements in various ministries, in the hospitals, police force and the courts, over the last nine years but we could not do everything in one year, it is not possible.

H15: 19.30 p.m.

Sequence 52

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

7:30 p.m.

Continuation of Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY:

This Government has undertaken the most extensive renovation of school plants known in the history of this country.

Mr. Speaker, do you know why I feel so passionate about it, because I met the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, myself and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, in the early 1995 before he went off to study, and we intimated to him that while we recognise that successive Governments had built new schools, they were more than 60 primary schools which had never received a single cent for major refurbishment. I can speak with passion about St. Matthew(s School which did not any work done, in more than 40 years.

Mr. Speaker, when I became Minister of Education in 1994, I found a plan in a file to close St. Matthew(s School and to move the students up to St. Augustine, as part of the Cuthbert Moore. We discussed, he as the representative for the Barbados Union of Teachers, and the Honourable Member for St.

Thomas and I decided that what we needed was a programme that spoke to the rehabilitation across the board.

Mr. Speaker, we have, separate from EduTech, ensured that we could spend \$2 million to \$3 million a year on refurbishment. There was even a joke that my predecessor was only concerned about fixing up police stations, Sir, because that was the extent to what we did. We sought to refurbish other buildings such as the old National Insurance office, the Treasury Building, the Post Office, the Courts and the Registry where substantial money has been spent.

Speaker, I cannot tell you that all is well but we are working assiduously towards correcting it. We have a population that is more cognizant of the challenges posed by environmental threats in a way that they were not, 20 years ago. There must be a corresponding increase in the Government expenditure to treat those issues because at that time, nobody spoke about air quality or whether in truth and in fact when you were servicing air-conditioners, you were also servicing the ducts that carried the air throughout the building, and not just the air-conditioned units themselves. All of these are things that are now vigorously engaged by the Government. We have a vibrant environmental health unit that does assessments across Government departments, on a regular basis.

It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that I would have the opportunity in the next year, to certify legislation that upgrades the requirements, not just in the public sector but across all working environments in Barbados, treating to occupational health and safety.

I am satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that a higher incidence of certain diseases in this country, relates to environmental threats which we face. I know that the Honourable Member for St. James South and the Honourable Member for

Christ Church South are passionate in their defence of how Government must seek to treat these issues with a level of seriousness.

The Honourable Member for St. James North, in his capacity as Minister of Labour, has intimated to us, on a regular basis, where they are with the drafting of the policy and the consultative process. We are determined to have consensus and consultative processes as part of our form of Governance. Mr. Speaker, to that extend, some decisions which may be taken in a short period are lengthened, by reason of that commitment to consensus building and the consultative process

Mr. Speaker, I only say to the Opposition that I trust they will avail themselves of the opportunities, in the future, to distance themselves from the retrograde steps of the Democratic Labour Party of the early 1990s, when it came to workers' rights.

The mere fact that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central continues to assert that, in spite of his political affiliation, he found it necessary to march against his Government, is an intimation of how retrograde, because no man should ever have to choose between his party and his trade union, in a way that he were forced to do, in 1991.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition ought to remember that not only were they at the same time increasing their salaries, while ensuring that not a soul else in Barbados received an increase, such that when the 8 per cent pay cut came, there was no net loss of salary on the part of any Democratic Labour Party member of Cabinet.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, they also ensured that the most generous mechanisms were found to regrade some people at the top, at the expense of those at the bottom. This caused

great consternation within the public service of Barbados, and led to a serious loss of morale.

Mr. Speaker, while they were doing all of that, do you know that they found other means of ensuring that persons, even in this Chamber, move from statutory organisations, such as the Central Bank to the Ministry of Finance, at far increased salaries, or that other members were offered contracts for five years at the most exorbitant terms and conditions.

When the Honourable Member for St. Philip West seeks to posture in here, Mr. Speaker, I ask only that he goes back to George Street as General Secretary and read the files. If it is that he is not prepared to read the files, then he needs to distance himself from the barbaric and retrograde behaviour of the Democratic Labour Party that he is associated with today.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition made a point, in relation to the single market and economy and continued to assert, as he did in the recent debate, that we had on the Economic Statement and Financial Proposals, that this Government(s attempt to adjust tax rates, could not be for the reasons advanced by the Prime Minister:

1.To increase disposable income

2.To keep Barbados(competitiveness in the context of a single market and economy.

His reasoning today is while there may be movement towards a single market, a single economy was far away.

Mr. Speaker, let us stop and think because I wonder whether he is truly au fait with the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, not to mention its implementation. It is in Chapter 3, that the rights pertaining to establishment are vested in the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. Those are the very rights that have been incorporated into

our legislation in April of this year. Those are the very rights that will be implemented ahead of time before the macroeconomic coordination and before the economic coordination of sectors, leading to the single economy.

Sir, the rights for establishment, simply give to businesses or individuals, the right to come and set up a business in a country. The contingent rights are simply those that allow them to reside in that country.

Mr. Speaker, if those rights are a commitment from Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad that they must exist by 2004 and in the other territories by 2005, it stands to reasons that anybody having the option to set up business in any territory in the region will look at all of the factors that determine whether they should set up or not, including, primarily, the taxes that they will have to pay.

It therefore means, Mr. Speaker, that if Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad have committed to implementing the rights of establishment, and honouring them in the Treaty by next year and, Mr. Speaker, next year is two weeks away, that we cannot wait until next year to make adjustments to our tax system to make it competitive in the region, because you will then not only be shortsighted but you will be reckless in your fiscal planning, in a way that is perhaps more associated with the early 1990s.

House 16, sequence 53, 7:40 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, it is not the intention of this Government, at a time when people would have to make a decision whether to set up in Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago as

early as next year, to find ourselves in an uncompetitive position particularly as it relates to taxation policies with Trinidad and Tobago or with Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, I have said enough on that because early in the new year we would have the opportunity to have a full debate on CARICOM, freedom of movement, the Accreditation Council and other obligations which would make Barbados fully single market compliant as we have committed to do by 2004.

Mr. Speaker, much was said about inflation. Mr. Speaker, it is now convenient to determine that there should be a revision of the retail price index. To add insult to injury, the Honourable Member said sotto voce, although I cannot hear, that it has been so for years. Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was advising the Ministry of Finance and the Minister of the Finance, he did not find it necessary to bring about a revision of the retail price index then, but it is opportune so to suggest today. Mr. Speaker, we have to be consistent.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. I have repeatedly said that with the introduction of a Value Added Tax which is imposed not only on goods but on services, that the retail price index, which we have today in Barbados, does not cover services in Barbados and therefore, it continues to underestimate increases in prices across the board. I have been making this call since the introduction of the Value Added Tax in 1997. It has nothing to do with being any advisor to the Government. In fact, that was an unfortunate seven month period in 1994.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition has described his period of time as an advisor to the Minister of the Finance, as an unfortunate seven months period. Mr. Speaker, what is also significant is that when he rendered the

advice as to the design of the Value Added Tax, which he was recommending not only on services, but indeed stated that it was desirable to impose it on food, he never intimated that there would be a consequential requirement for a revision of the retail price index to be able to properly plan and to assess the impact of the Value Added Tax.

Mr. Speaker, in these circumstances, I say only to him that there must be a level of consistency in respect of his comments in this Honourable Chamber. Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can sympathise with him because he has four or five persons riding on his back on a daily basis and to that extent it therefore means he is unable to treat to issues in a proper way. I can only say to him that his protests are perhaps best heard by his colleagues because his protests would require him to ensure that those comments are kept in George Street because when he is not there in George Street, determinations are made as to who is number one and number two. Mr. Speaker, I really do sympathise with him because he is obviously undergoing the greatest period of stress that he has ever had to face in his life.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I would have intimated that over 194 public officers would have received full pay leave to pursue training in the service. That is without prejudice to the over 1 000 public officers who received opportunities for short term training across all ministries last year. This is consistent with the stand we have taken that if you are going to implement a new performance appraisal system that the first step you take in making an assessment that a person is not up to speed, is not to discipline them but to give them the opportunity to be able to come up to speed, in circumstances where they have both the inclination and you provide the opportunity through making the training available. This is a process which we would continue.

Mr. Speaker, much was said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in relation to a productivity scheme. May I just say for the record that Government has in the past treated to a productivity scheme across-the-board. What was being determined was a productivity scheme to reward individual efforts. It is our view that we have not yet devise an appropriate transparent system to reward individual effort in relation to productivity. To seek therefore to have another across the board productivity scheme will mean that those who carry the brunt are not being properly rewarded for the additional effort. Therefore, it would make a nonsense of productivity schemes for us to do so in a way that does not reflect that individual merit. We have tried to do so with the flexibility responsibility allowance so that those who do extra work in court, in the hospital, in the prison or at the police stations are given the flexible allowance as opposed to across all ranks of the police force.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all honourable members who participated in the debate. I want simply to say again that there is a requirement on the part of all of us to ensure that we reduce the level of posturing. Some feel that posturing is part of the theatre of Parliament, but if you so reflect posturing without the substance of the day, then all we would do is to increase the cynicism and apathy that is associated with the institution of Parliament.

I can only ask that as we take the four weeks rest from the work of Parliament that we reflect on these matters and come back prepared. There will be times when the Opposition would oppose, but I do feel that on this occasion that the Opposition, having been recently wounded that they are not performing as an Opposition, are simply opposing for the sake of opposing. They need to be able to discern when they need to oppose and when they need not, for to vote against salaries increases for the public servants

of Barbados in circumstances where their record as a Party is to cut salaries and vote against amendments in a Constitution to stop governments from cutting salaries, in my view, so intertwines them with that unfortunate history of the early 1990s, that I would have wished for the rise of a new Democratic Labour Party in these circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this Resolution to this Honourable Chamber. As I intimated at the beginning, we are treating all of the other Resolutions that will come as a single debate. We have adverted to the Bill which is to be brought as well as part of this debate although we recognise that the parliamentary process would require us to just treat to it in its formal stage on the Order Paper when it comes.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker, and beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put.

A division has been called.

The bell was rung.

House 15 Sequence 54

7:50 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

Ayes:

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY,

Mr. L. R. TULL, Hon. R. C. EASTMOND,

Hon. G. A. CLARKE, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL,

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY, Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN,

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE,

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY,

Hon. N. A. LYNCH, Hon. A. P. WOOD,

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, Dr. W. F. DUGUID,

Hon. Dr. J. X. WALCOTT, Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS,

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL.

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Noes:

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, Mr. D. H. J. THOMPSON,

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY, Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN,

Mr. R. D. JONES, Dr. D. C. ESTWICK, Mr. R. L. SEALY.

- 7

Mr. SPEAKER: The results of the division are as follows Nineteen Honourable Members have voted aye and

seven Honourable Members have voted no. The ayes have it.

The Resolution is, therefore, passed and so

cited.

ORDER NO. 8
A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT
(TEACHERS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER,
2003.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I simply beg to move that this Resolution do now pass, recognising that the debate has already taken place.

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

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 9
A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT
(PART-TIME OFFICERS) ORDER, 2003
Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO.10
A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
SENATE AND HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
(REMUNERATION AND ALLOWANCES
OF MEMBERS) ORDER, 2003.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO.11

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
JUDGES REMUNERATION AND
PENSIONS (CONDITIONS OF SERVICE
AND ALLOWANCES) (AMENDMENT)
REGULATIONS, 2003.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative.

ORDER NO.12

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN
ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3(2) OF
THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL
(CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) ACT, CAP.6
THE AMENDMENT OF THE SCHEDULE
TO THAT ACT BY DELETING
PARAGRAPH 1 THEREOF AND
SUBSTITUTING PARAGRAPH 1 AS
CONTAINED IN THE SCHEDULE TO THIS
RESOLUTION.

(1. Salary at the rate of

(a)\$148 409.28 per annum with effect from April 01, 2003;

(b)\$152 861.52 per annum with effect from April 01, 2004;

(c)\$157 447.32 per annum with effect from April 01, 2005.)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO.13

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
RATES OF SALARY AND ALLOWANCES
APPLICABLE TO THE POSTS OF
PERSONAL ASSISTANTS TO MINISTERS
AS SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE TO THIS
RESOLUTION.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 14

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
PAYMENT OF AN INCREASED COST OF
LIVING ALLOWANCE TO GOVERNMENT
PENSIONERS AS SET OUT IN THE
SCHEDULE TO THIS RESOLUTION

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO.16

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE

RATES OF SALARIES AND
ALLOWANCES APPLICABLE TO THE
POSTS OF PERSONAL ASSISTANT,
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, THE PRESS
SECRETARY, EXECUTIVE PERSONAL
SECRETARY AND CLERICAL ASSISTANT
TO THE PRIME MINISTER AS SET OUT IN
THE SCHEDULE TO THIS RESOLUTION
Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I
beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

The question that the Resolution do now pass
was put and resolved in the affirmative without
division.

FIRST READING OF BILLS (RECOMMITTED)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I
beg to move the First Reading of the Ministers
and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration
and Allowances) (Amendment) Bill, 2003.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (RESUMED) ORDER NO. 15 THE MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES (REMUNERATION AND ALLOWANCES) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2003.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I
beg to move that this Bill be read a second
time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A.
MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY
the House resolved itself into Committee of
Supply. Mr. R. D. MARSHALL, Chairman of
Committees in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: This House is now
in Committee of Supply.

Clauses 1 - 2 inclusive, were called and
passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the
Bill.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A.
MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY,
Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the
SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in
Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the
Chair and reported accordingly.

House No. 15 (55) 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16, 2003

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss M.A.
MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R.C.
EASTMOND, the Bill was read a third time,
passed and cited as the Ministers and
Parliamentary Secretaries Remuneration and
Allowances (Amendment) Act, 2003.

ORDER NO. 17 TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF

SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE
OF THIS ISLAND.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY seconded by Hon. R.C. EASTMOND, the House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. R.D. MARSHALL, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF
\$561,352.00 FROM
THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO
PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL
OF THE GOVERNMENT TO
SUPPLEMENT THE
ESTIMATES 2003-2004 AS SHOWN IN
THE
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 7,
2002-2003
WHICH FORMS THE SCHEDULE TO
THE RESOLUTION.

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER(S OFFICE -
\$561,362 00

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the amounts required relates to \$96,965 for the replenishment of the below-the-line account of Community Independence because this year they had to purchase decorative lights for Parliament since the ones on the building were damaged when they were taken down when the building was being cleaned. Secondly, the sum of \$337,800 is required to meet the cost of fuel and maintenance of five small coast guard vessel due to the cancellation of military funding by the Government of the United States of America, the dry-docking of the Trident which included comprehensive maintenance of its hull and its mechanical and electronic equipment. There is also being requested the sum of \$89 900 to supplement the

cost of publishing Government Notices, given the volume of Notices which has to be published in the context of this financial year.

There is a small amount of \$5,738 cover the cost of salary, wages and allowances for the staff of Archives Department and a sum of \$30, 949 to cover the cost of utilities, in particularly electricity and telephone charges for the Archives Department.

With those few words, I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B.A. Miller, Mr. Chairman reported passing of one Money Resolution to Mr. SPEAKER and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER, the Resolution was read a first, second and third time and passed.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today(s sitting and for the year 2003. It has been a long and eventful year, one that has not ended with the same composition of Parliament that it began it and has seen us treat to many new things. I want in particular at this stage, to highlight the contribution of the workers of Parliament particularly in making it possible to make the adjustment to those who have become new members of this Chamber as seamless as possible and to ensure that their transition, so far as the arrangements of Parliament are concerned, have been to their

satisfaction.

I want in Parliament to thank those at the Clerk(s) table and those who have the responsibility of reporting our works to ensure that they are kept for posterity and reference in future years not only by ourselves but for others across the society, those who are charged with the responsibility of ensuring our security, a matter which sometimes we take for granted. While we may not have any obvious threats in relation to persons wanting to overthrow Governments in this country, there are those who may still pose a threat because of some mental defect, therefore, their job is never easy because it requires that they be on alert at all times when they are within the precincts of Parliament. I also want to thank those who are charged with ensuring that while we work in these Chambers, we are provided with some form of sustenance to ensure that the quality of the debate is not affected by the lack of sustenance by only be deliberate intention or incapacity.

I simply want to wish all Honourable Members and those associated with the work of Parliament in whatever way, those within the media who continue to be an ally in respect of the dissemination of information to the public of Barbados, to say to everyone that we should have a blessed and Merry Christmas.

May the blessing of the Lord attach itself to each and every one of us in the new year as we continue to build a strong Barbados and to ensure that the quality of life of all of us shall improve by dint of our efforts collectively.

Mr. Speaker, in particular I want to say that we expect, by the amount of work being carried over on the Order Paper, that when we return there will be much to be done because the first quarter of next year requires the Estimates to be completed. There are four Bills on the Order Paper which will be debated early in the new

year and I can only say to all to get a good rest as we shall need it upon our return.

H15/20:10

Sequence 56

Thursday, December 16, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY
Mr. Speaker, with those few words I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned until January 13, 2004 at 10.00 o'clock in the morning.

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

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the adjournment and to associate myself with the remarks of the Leader of Government Business to thank the workers of Parliament for being so gracious whenever we need assistance in our preparations for the dates. I also thank the security staff of Parliament for ensuring that there are no attempts to stop us from doing the people(s) business on Tuesdays and overall to thank all of those associated with providing an environment that is conducive for proper work within the Honourable Chamber.

I would like to say a very special thanks to the Members of the Opposition for providing such a formidable force in recent debates since the start of this Parliamentary Session. Contrary to the public pronouncement on the other side, I think that deep in their hearts they have recognised that this team has performed remarkably well over the last several months.

Therefore, I am saying that we are going to wish all Honourable Members in this Chamber and the staff a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year, and we do look forward

to working tirelessly in the coming year on behalf of the good people of Barbados.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before I move the adjournment I would like, on behalf of the other presiding officers, the Clerks, members of staff, who have helped us so well, and myself to wish all Members a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

I would also like to say that it has never been the practice in our debates here for members to become very personal. I hope that what started today and what I have noticed beginning to transpire in our debates would not be a practice when we return. I think that is something that has been the standard with all members, so I wish everybody, once again, a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

The question that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday the 13th January, 2004 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

H15: 20.13 p.m.

Sequence 57