
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2018 – 2022

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

At a meeting of the House of Assembly at the Worthing Corporate Centre on Tuesday, September 29, 2020, at 10.00 a.m. pursuant to the Adjournment.

PRESENT:

His Honour A. E. HOLDER, B.Sc. (Hons.) MSW, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Speaker)

His Honour G. A. CLARKE, J.P., B.Sc., Dip. Ed. (Deputy Speaker)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of International Business and Industry)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment, Minister of National Security and the Civil Service)

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P., (Minister of People

Empowerment and Elder Affairs)

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., (Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs)

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

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B., (Minister of Energy, Small Business and Entrepreneurship)

Lt. Col. the Hon. J. D. BOSTIC, MVO, B.A. (Hons.)

(Minister of Health and Wellness)

Hon. E. G. HINKSON, LL.B (Hons.) L.E.C., LL.M

Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.B.A (Dist.)

(Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Development)

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.,

(Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training) (Leader of Government Business)

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY, J.P., B.A., B.Sc., PgD.

(Leader of the Opposition)

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID, J.P., B.S.S., F.D.S., F.D.R.C.S., M.Min.

(Minister of Housing, Lands and Maintenance)

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAM, LL.B. (Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs)

Hon. Ms. C. S. V. HUSBANDS, B.A. (Hons.), M.sc.

(Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Trade)

Hon. I. A. Weir, M.B.A.

(Minister of Agriculture and Food Security)

Hon. A. R. FORDE, RPh. (Minister of Environment and National Beautification)

Hon. C. McD. GRIFFITH, B.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Water Resources)

Hon. P. R. PHILLIPS, (Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security)

Hon. J. A. KING, BSS (Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, with Responsibility for Culture and National Development Commission)

Hon. C. E. JORDAN, B.Sc. (Hons.) (Minister of Labour and

Social Partnership Relations)

Dr. S. E. BROWNE, M.B.B.S. (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.P.A.

(Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy)

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN, B.Sc., M.Sc. M.P.

(Minister in the Ministry of Finance)

Hon. Miss M. K-A. CADDLE, B.A., M.Sc.

(Minister in the Ministry of Economic Affairs)

Mr. N. G. H. ROWE,

Mr. R. A. THORNE, Q.C. LL.B., L.E.C., Dip. Theology

Mr. G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL

(Minister of Transport Works and Water Resources

Prayers were taken by Rev. Father Mark Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 to be confirmed.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker I beg to move that the said minutes be taken as read.

Hon. C.E. JORDAN: Second that.

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

MESSAGES FROM HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER: Messages from the Governor General.

By Her Excellency Dame Sandra Prunella Mason, Dame Grand Cross of the most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Dame of St. Andrew Queen's Counsel, Governor General of Barbados.

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS by Section 28A of the Emergency Management Act, Cap. 160A it is provided that where the Governor-General is satisfied that a public health emergency has arisen as a result of a person or an animal having a communicable disease or a notifiable disease, the Governor-General may by proclamation declare that a public health emergency exists;

AND WHEREAS I am satisfied that a public health emergency has arisen as a result of the presence of a communicable disease or a notifiable disease;

NOW THEREFORE by virtue of the power and authority vested in me, I do hereby declare that a public health emergency exists in Barbados.

Given under my hand and the

Public Seal of Barbados, this 28th day

of September, 2020 and in the sixty-

ninth year of Her Majesty's Reign.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the order of the day.

ORDER NO. 03 – RESIGNATION OF A MEMBER

Mr. SPEAKER: Notice of the letter of resignation was given on September 22nd, 2020. I now direct that the letter be recorded in the minutes and that the seat be declared vacant.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker I beg to move that an address be sent to Her Excellency the Governor- General, asking Her Excellency to issue a writ for an election to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of the Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, the address from the Honourable the House of Assembly to Her Excellency the Governor General will read as follows:

“The House has the honour to present our humble duty.

By reason of the resignation of His Honour Gline Arley Clarke, Justice of Peace, a vacancy has this 30th day of September, 2020, arisen for a Member of the House Assembly for the constituency of St. George North.

Accordingly, the House has this day passed this Address to be forwarded to Your Excellency asking you to issue a writ for an election to fill the vacancy, pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Representation of the People Act, Cap. 12.

Approved by the Honourable House of Assembly this 29th day of September, 2020.”

The question that the motion be passed was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 02

To move the second reading of the Public Service Appointment Bill, 2020

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, some famous actor I believe used the term once *deja vu* all over again. The redundancy is no doubt noted by Members of the Chamber. However, I raise this issue because towards the end of 2007, the Barbados Labour Party Administration in that time sought to bring a piece of legislation to Parliament and to the country which would modernise the arrangements in respect of the public service, but perhaps more importantly deal with an acute and burning issue that

has bedevilled the lives of people who have laboured in the name of Government over the years.

Mr. Speaker, at that time, we as a Government were about to complete serving three terms. Former Prime Minister Owen Arthur was resolute that we could not force the electorate, contemplate going into Government, in fact that we could not seriously think about taking another step unless we had dealt with the public service.

Sir, I think that anybody would recognise that our public service and how it operated was a matter sometimes of mystery; appointments, seniority, supersession.

People seemed not to know where to go and I not talking about physically, Sir. I am talking about the fact that at that time our Public Service constituting, I believe, well over 20 000 people but being administered by a central agency that was dealing with Public Service rules and General Orders that dated back to the time of “Tom” Adams. One of the important features of that legislation back in 2007 was Section 13- I do not think 13 in that instance was an unlucky number- which sought to guarantee public servants who had been in a post for three or more years their appointment. It was well received.

I remember labouring into the night as Attorney General along with the then Minister, the Honourable Rawle Eastmond. We had union representatives at the table. We had the Head of the Public Service and additional people at the table as we tried to craft a provision that sought to satisfy the needs of the Public Service. Mr. Speaker, in 2007 it was not perfect when we passed it but we recognised then that perfection was not to be our quest but that it was a more important task that we satisfy the needs of the vast majority of public servants who were in that position for appointment. Our party was committed to that concept then and we remain committed to that concept now. We would have hoped that even though we had lost the election that a succeeding Administration would have recognised the noble cause we had started on and follow through.

Instead, that provision it appears to us was considered to be nothing more than some kind of political slight-of-hand which the last Administration felt we were using to satisfy or to benefit Barbados Labour Party supporters. It was not. However, I believe that so deep was their mistrust and suspicion that they determined they would ignore those valued and important parts of the new Public Service Act. Instead of getting down to the business of dealing with appointments, the last Administration got down to the business of asking which public servant is a Barbados Labour Party supporter or Democratic Labour Party supporter. They asked who the person voted for and did not vote for in the last election.

Mr. Speaker, one of the commitments in the BLP Manifesto is headed by four simple words: Helping People to Live. In recent times, Mr. Speaker, you would have heard it repeated often that we come to power or to Government to stop poor people from being poor. Helping people to live is just another way of expressing that same ideal. What is the context? The context, Mr. Speaker, is that years after we passed that Bill and sought to give public servants the right to be appointed, we have returned to Government to find that the same morass still existed. Thousands of public servants in a job and doing that job to the best of their ability, somehow the unwieldy and byzantine system called Public Administration seem never to be able to ensure that public servants receive the appointments that they deserved.

Mr. Speaker, it boggles the mind that we could have tried to fix an ill in 2007 and that 11 years later when we came to power, the very ill that we tried to fix then was still a spectre and a block on the Public Service. In our Manifesto, we committed to helping people to live. What better way could there be of helping people to live than giving them security of tenure in their jobs. Mr. Speaker, I suppose if we do not blow our own trumpet no one will blow it for us, so let me take you a bit further down memory lane. When we came to Government in 1994, there was something called a casual worker. A casual worker was someone who essentially could be dismissed at pleasure.

You were here today and sent home tomorrow. Your work was considered to be casual. Language tells a story. Do you remember when you had the days of the illegitimate child? In our thinking and law, a child could have been considered lacking in legitimacy, so he was an illegitimate child. In our law as far as the Public Service was concerned, a person was considered to be a casual worker. We talk about casual dress. We talk about a casual stroll down the street but the notion that a human being fighting for survival and working day in and day out to preserve his well-being and his family through earning a live, the notion that person could be considered a casual worker was deeply offensive to the BLP.

Work could never be casual and a worker could never be considered to be casual either. We got rid of that Victorian concept and gave every employee the standing of being a proper worker in Barbados. The term came about of a "temporary employee". Sir, that was the beginning of an evolution in how we deal with the Public Service. The thing about an evolution is that you recognize that the job is never at an end but somehow it is déjà vu all over again. We are now again where we were in 2007. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that a public servant who goes to work every day in a job, kept in that job and paid for that job ought to be able to harbour some sense of entitlement to that job.

However, for all kinds of reasons those individuals have not been appointed to those jobs. I sat in a meeting with the Honourable Prime Minister in 2018 and in that meeting the Honourable Prime Minister gave the instruction to the heads of the civil service that they should immediately set about the task of dealing with the appointment of public servants. One assumes that when the Prime Minister speaks that the individuals are going to jump immediately into action and I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that they try, but today we have thousands of public servants who remain unappointed to their jobs and who need to be helped to live. Those public servants, Mr. Speaker, as they were in the first decade of this century and in all the decades before that, found themselves suffering from the impediment of not being able to go to a bank and say, I want to borrow money for a mortgage because the letter that they would bring from the Government that employs them would say that they are a temporary employee. Sir, you have done many transactions and many mortgages, I know. You may have worked for the lender but perhaps, more often than not, you worked for the borrower, but it would not surprise you or any of us that an individual who is going to be lending money especially over a long term, a 25-year period for a house, would be justifiably worried about the ability of that employee to pay over time if the letter says that they are a temporary employee. This is something that has cried out for attention and so, Mr. Speaker, we come to this Honourable Chamber today to pass a law which will do what we ask to have done, what we committed to do but because of the inability of the machinery of the public service to get it done we have had to take it into our own hands. In a way, Sir, this is perhaps the highest calling of a Parliament that it seeks, through legislation, to bestow an important benefit on its citizens. A lot of the time, Sir, especially over the last two years, we have passed a lot of laws saying thou shalt not. Thou shalt not get bail if found with a firearm, thou shalt not do this, thou shalt not do that. We have passed legislation to change tax structures. We have passed all manner of laws and all of them without doubt are for the better Government of our country but today, Sir, we are perhaps at our best when we passed a law which says I am giving you status, I am giving you a reason to be proud.

Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent that I can think of in particular and the rules would not allow me to all a name but that person has been acting in a post in the public service with some responsibility for many years. In fact, if you speak to his supervisors, if you speak to the people who are to instruct him, they tell you that they could not find a better man for that job, and that individual out of sheer frustration took the position that he was going to retire from the service because no matter how hard he worked, no matter the praises of the people who were above him, he could not get an appointment and the reason why he could not get an appointment was something called the qualification bar. He was qualified enough through

experience, through hard work and through sheer intellect to do that job every single day, not just to the best of his ability but also to the satisfaction of the people who supervised him, but because he did not have some particular qualification on paper, he could not be appointed. He is good enough to do it but he is not good enough to claim it as his. How bazaar can we be? For shame, because if a person is good enough to do the job, but somehow because he is not qualified, he cannot claim it to be his, then you should say well you cannot get the job at all. Those are the kinds of injustices that have operated in our public service for many years and the time has come for those kinds of things to be brought to an end. Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier that we were not in 2007 looking for perfection and while we have done the best that we could to make sure that this Bill covers as many people as possible with a minimum of friction and waste we know that there will be some imperfection but we think that embarking on this particular course of action is not only prudent, it is the decent thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you how we have approached this Bill and I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that it is not an amendment to the Public Service Act. We have determined that this is of particular significance and it is therefore called the Public Service (Appointment) Bill. It is a stand-alone piece of legislation and in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, we have provided for two sets of people. Firstly, those people who are temporary and that means that they are not appointed to the public service and we say that if a person who is not appointed to the public service but who has been employed in a temporary office or an established office, or a combination of the two, for three years or more immediately before 1st October, 2020 then that person is deemed to be appointed to the post. Now let us disaggregated that, let us break it down into its component parts. The first is the date, 1st October, just two days away. If you are acting in a post for 3 years or more immediately before 1st October then you will be deemed to be appointed. Now I know there are a number of questions and a number of iterations and that is why I began by saying that we are not getting perfection here and we are not trying to get perfection because there are individuals who have been in the public service for many years and they will, at various times, have acted in post, perhaps for three years or more. A person might have acted in a post for three years let us say from 2010 to 2013 and they may have acted in another post from 2015 to 2018 but we are honing in, as we did back in 2007 on individuals who, for three years prior to the first of October 2020 for three years or more, so the date is important so we need to fix that in our minds, and you must be in a post for that time.

Mr. Speaker, the scenario has been put that if you were in a post for three years but you got promoted or reassigned and you are now in a post for only one year what would happen. I understand that some are advancing

the argument that you should be appointed to the post that you were in for three years. Let me make it clear that that is not the intent of this Bill. The intent of this Bill is to give you an appointment where you are as at the effective date, 1st of October, in a post and in that post for three or more years, so go from 1st of October and count back. Mr. Speaker, that is an anomaly, and I will talk about how we intend to correct that later on in my presentation to the Chamber, but it is not something that has gone unnoticed.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to draw to your attention the provision that you can be in a combination of a temporary office and in an established post. Mr. Speaker, this is especially relevant given what we brought to Parliament in August. In August we brought a Public Service Order which sought to convert a number of temporary posts into established posts, so someone, Mr. Speaker, might have been in a temporary post as at the date of that Order but when once that Order was made that person's post now becomes established so that person would have been in a single post for three years, but let us say for the first two years and nine months it was temporary but for the last two or three months it has been established, then that person gets the benefit of an appointment to that post.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to temporary public servants, there is a double benefit because by virtue of this Bill you are at the same time being appointed to the public service. Now, it goes without saying that you cannot be appointed to a post unless you are also appointed to the public service but even though they amount to the same thing it is worthy that the two separate points should be noted because a temporary person is a person who has not been appointed to the public service so they get the benefit (1) of an appointment and (2) an appointment to the post that they were in for three or more years.

The other category of person that we deal with is a person who has been appointed to the public service. That person, who having been appointed to the public service whenever, sometime before, who is in a post that they are not appointed to for three or more years prior immediately before the 1st of October then that person also gets the benefit of that appointment, so those are the two categories of people: People who are not appointed to the public service and then people who are appointed to the public service. They are dealt with separately because their characteristics are different, but the effect is the same. In each case if you are in the post for three or more years immediately before the 1st of October then you would get the benefit of an appointment.

Mr. Speaker, as I said it is not lost on us that there are individuals who will have been acting in posts for significant periods of time and perhaps through hard work and so on they might be promoted, they might be put in an

another post, but this Bill is not going to deal with that individual, that individual does not get that benefit but I will come to those individuals later.

The other important thing, Sir, is that we came face-to-face with some realities. We recognise that there may be instances where even though a person might fit this Bill, no pun intended, but that they may be reasons why such a person may not be entitled or may not be considered for appointment and we have tried to isolate - probably not a good word to use in today's COVID media - in Section 6 the circumstances where we feel a person ought not to be considered for appointment, so at Section 6(1) it says:

“A person shall not be eligible for an appointment to the office under section 5 where the person...”

and there are five exceptions noted (1) where you are presently the subject of a disciplinary matter commenced pursuant to the Public Service Act or any other relevant legislation, so if at that time, the 1st of October, you are the subject of a disciplinary matter we are in effect withholding your right to appointment until that disciplinary matter is resolved. Mr. Speaker, there is good reason for this because of the slow and cumbersome way that the public service deals with disciplinary matters, there are many disciplinary matters that have been pending for quite some time. In some instances, the individual may be found to have been guilty of misconduct and in other instances when it is eventually disposed of the individual might be found not to be guilty of misconduct. What we are saying is that the question of your right to appointment would be deferred until that matter has been resolved, so if at the conclusion of your disciplinary matter you are found, may I use the word, Mr. Speaker, to have been guilty, then you do not benefit from this right but on the other hand if you are found innocent, if you are discharged from that disciplinary matter, then you benefit from your appointment and you will be deemed to have been appointed as at the 1st of October.

The other category of person is the person who is the subject of an ongoing criminal matter. Public servants are just like anybody else. They find themselves running afoul of the law and find themselves facing criminal charges and if a person is therefore facing a criminal charge as at the 1st of October then that person will not benefit from the appointment, but the same principle holds true, if you are exonerated from that charge, then you will be appointed retroactively with effect from the 1st of October.

There is yet another category of exceptions, Mr. Speaker, and that would be a person who has already been convicted. Our law, Mr. Speaker, allows for the expungement of a criminal record, and that statute is the Criminal Records Expungement Act. It is a piece of legislation that was carried through this Parliament by the

former Attorney-General and former Chief Justice of Barbados Sir David Simmons and it revolutionised how we deal with people in Barbados who though they have run afoul of the law have acted in such a way thereafter to show that they had reformed because we felt that it was wrong when a person has turned their life around that they should be forever held to the impediment of being considered to be a criminal and have it written across their forehead in indelible ink. Mr. Speaker, that Criminal Records Expungement Act says that where your criminal record has been expunged for all purposes you are deemed not to have that conviction on your record.

Mr. Speaker, when we combine that particular legislation to this scenario, it is obvious that the only way to deal with it would be to provide that if you have a criminal record, but you have not taken steps to have it expunged, then we are not going to appoint you. However at some point in time you may have it expunged but if that happens, if you get the benefit of the expungement, it relates back to the doctrine of relation and therefore you would benefit from that appointment retroactively.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Fourth Category is a person who is on medical leave for a total of three months in any one calendar year and (not or) you have been sent to the Medical Board. If the Medical Board finds that you are not fit for work, then, really an appointment is odious. If the Medical Board finds that you are fit for work, then the appointment would relate back, and effective October 1st, you will benefit from that appointment.

The final category, Sir, are individuals who in their personnel records have a negative report, or a report of conduct which contravenes the Public Service Act any other enactments, so that that person, if you have negative reports, if you have contravened the regulations, then we are not going to reward bad behaviour -- plain and simple. Hence, you would have to be appointed in the ordinary course of things. We are not saying that you could never be appointed, you could be appointed in the ordinary course of things, but you would not benefit from this appointment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, perhaps I should digress a little, or refer to the 2007 legislation. That legislation used different language, that legislation said that if you were in the public service in a post for three or more years [that] you were entitled to the post. So, it gave you an entitlement. However, that entitlement then had to be actuated or activated by the Public Service because the Public Service then had to go through a whole set of stuff -- were you qualified based on all kinds of things and if you were not qualified you had two years within which you could go and become qualified. Mr. Speaker, Sir, a whole set of things happened thereafter which may or may not have seen you getting the benefit of your appointment. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are not prepared to adopt that stance on

this occasion because we know that there are people who would have been entitled back then but who still have not gotten the benefit of the appointment in 2020. Hence the language that we are using here, Sir, is the word “deemed”. We are not saying that you are entitled, we are saying that you are “deemed” to have been appointed. It is a firm and strict statement of your status. Effective October 1st, you are “deemed” to have been appointed. The only thing that the Ministry of the Public Service has to do thereafter is to when they go through their records they will be able to give you a letter saying that with effect from October 1st, you are appointed, and what post that you are appointed to -- plain and simple.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, of course, you will remember (because I think you used to be a public servant eons ago and you had this concept... You do not look it, but we know it was young. Me too, I meant the “don’t look it part”) (and yes, I also worked as a teacher for a year at a place called Harrison’s College, one time. The worst experience of my life. However, that is a story for another day, and my students then still love me). Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the Public Service there is a concept of something called “a vacant post”. Now, in the private sector (and I think all of us here have come from the private sector) if you have 10 clerks and you want an 11th clerk you so hire that 11th clerk, you now have 11 clerks. There is no concept of clerks that are in established post and clerks that are in a temporary post, you simply hire the number that you need, and if you do not need that many you reduce the number that you need, by terminating somebody’s contract. In the Public Service we have this thing called “established posts” and those posts may be vacant, meaning that there is nobody who is in that post working. Also, there may be somebody in that post working but they might have been reassigned somewhere else, promoted or something else, so that the post is not “vacant”, it is just that the person appointed to that post has gone elsewhere, and under our current rules nobody can be appointed to that post, because we seem to harbour the idea that at some point in time John Brown or Patsy Brown may come back and sit in that chair, so that you cannot have anybody else sitting in it. So [that] because an individual is acting in a post that somebody else has, that person does not get the benefit of an appointment to that post.

Now, recognising, Sir, that that can be an impediment to this instance, we have taken the steps in this legislation of saying if there is no vacant post, or if there is no established post to which you can be appointed, this Act, by virtue of being passed, creates what is called the supernumerary post. Now, I know that the public listening is probably by now getting a little bit confused as to the jargon. In fact, I believe if this were not my second bite at the cherry, I would probably be a little confused at it myself. “Supernumerary” if you go back to grammar, “numery” meaning number, and *supra* meaning over the

number, so that if in the Public Service in a particular area you have three posts of Permanent Secretaries that are established, you can create a fourth post and that fourth post, until it is regularised, is considered to be supernumerary. so in the context of what we are doing here, we are “deeming” people to be appointed individuals but those individuals may not be in a post that is vacant, they may not be in a post that is permanent either, so what we are saying is that we are not going back to the Public Service and asking them to prepare another Order, because we know how long that takes, we are not doing that because we recognised that if we could say to the Public Service, “Go and prepare another Order to create posts to put these people in”, and that is a Parliamentary process, why on earth could we not do the Parliamentary process one time and done? That makes sense to me, so instead of going through the exercise of laying by affirmative Resolution a new Public Service Order creating posts (because that might now take another six months) we are saying “such posts as are necessary to give effect and meaning to this Bill are hereby created” - plain and simple. We are not doing this in two bites, we believe that we can cross this particular chasm with a single leap, by saying: “We are hereby creating such supernumerary posts as are required for this purpose.”

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the other important thing that I would want to mention in relation to this Bill has to do with the fact Mr. Speaker, Sir, that there are some individuals in the public service who were engaged to do projects. Now a project by definition is something which has started and it has an end, and implicit in that is the fact that your expectation would be that at the completion of the project you would be thanked for your service, you would be given what is your due, and you would go on your way. That is not intended to be callous but the fact of the matter is that if you hire a carpenter to change your roof, he starts working the day he starts taking off the old roof, and when the new roof is finished you shake his hand, thank him and say, “Job well done” and he goes on his way. In the Public Service there are occasions when special projects are required to be adopted, and those projects will have a lifetime. In some instances, it may be short, it may be for two months, it may be fourths and it may be for a year, but it may also be for three years. It may be extended for a fourth or fifth year. There are some specialist areas in Government that can see a project going on for an extended period. We may bring on an engineer to supervise works in the Scotland District. That is a project. When the project starts, he starts, but when the works in the Scotland District are completed then the project comes to an end.

Sir, it was never the intention and it is not our intention that an individual who is in a project post should be deemed to be appointed to the Public Service. To do so would create an absurdity because it would mean that when the project is finished, there is nothing for John Brown or

Inez Brown to do. In Jamaica, we would have to then embark on something called “mek wuk” which means you have to find something, and often the something which you get them to do is so... “Mek wuk”, I think you understand what I am trying to say. Therefore, because those projects are contemplated as having a finite lifetime, then a person in a project, even though they may have been in it for three years immediately before October 1st, it is not intended that that person would benefit from a permanent appointment to the Public Service. That would be going much further than we think reasonable. Therefore, for a person whether appointed or not to the Public Service but is in a project post, there is no appointment to give you because it is not in our contemplation that project posts would in any circumstances be considered as being permanent.

Sir, I spoke about the anomaly and the fact that we accept that we will not have perfection. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are going to be some people who I concede will be disadvantaged by the operation of this Bill. It is not intended to be a slight to them but we feel that the system can be self-correcting if allowed to do so, but there are a large number of people who we feel it is important to deal with right away and that is our commitment. That is what this Bill is intended to do. The other people, those people whom the trade unions are concerned about, for example someone who has been in the Public Service for 15, 18, ten or seven years, and who may have acted in a post for three years but is not currently in that post, those people are not ineligible for appointment. What we are saying is this: Instructions have been given to the Public Service to redouble its efforts to ensure that those people get what is their due.

The challenge which we recognise, however, has to do with this vexed concept of seniority. Sir, an individual who might have started working for Government, let us, five years ago and has had the good fortune to be in a post for three years immediately before October 1st.... So, they joined the Public Service only five years ago but have been in a post for three years before October 1st; they will be appointed. In the case of a person who has been in the Public Service for 15 years and has acted in all kinds of three-year posts but is not now so acting, a person with only five years will end up being senior in the Public Service to the individual who has been in the Public Service for a number of years. We recognise that this is an anomaly but firstly let me say that we have directed the Public Service to redouble its efforts -- I said it just now and I am repeating it -- to make sure that all of those people are appointed.

Secondly, I remind the Chamber that seniority is but one factor to be considered in relation to appointments. Seniority is but one factor to be considered in relation to your advancement in the Public Service: just one factor. A

person who is a good public servant can still expect to be advanced when required, when merited or when an opportunity arises even though a person in the same grade may be senior to them. Mr. Speaker, I well remember our discussions in 2007 because there were several individuals who sought to advance the case for seniority as being the most important factor. In other words, “I was here first, no matter how poorly I performed, I was here first and I am entitled to the appointment”. That was canvassed, but it was rejected because we recognise that in a 21st Century Barbados we need to move from seniority to merit. Barbados cannot function in a modern milieu unless we reward people based on merit.

Asides.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: It is a meritocracy. Maybe I should say it again in the hope of garnering more applause.

Asides.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: I believe other people can repeat when their time comes to speak. Sir, in a competitive world you will succeed based on how good you are.

Asides.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Has that not been our experience professionally and personally? I am sure that the training of the Member who just banged on the table the longest is in pharmacy, and from the absence of grey in his hair he is a relatively young pharmacist but the fact is that there was a time when he joined the professional pharmacy and he might have been wondering, with all of these people who have been here for 20, 30 and 40 years before him, how was he going to get ahead. He got ahead based on his merit, and I am sure he has gone and left in his dust many people who were pharmacists long before him. Mr. Speaker, you came to the legal profession before me and in the area of criminal law you have left me in your dust, and long may that remain, but the point is, Sir -- I may be putting a humorous slant on it -- we cannot overstate this: Barbados is a meritocracy and we as public leaders must demonstrate that in our management and recruitment in the Public Service.

Yes, experience is important, and seniority may bring that experience but in today's milieu in order for Barbados to be the best that we can be, we have to focus in large measure on merit. I therefore want to assure public servants that because we are appointing people with effect from Thursday that it does not in any way suggest or mean that others who are not so appointed will be left out in the cold. That is not our desire or intention. However, at this point in time, this category of individuals is going to be

dealt with and the public service, protective service and other commissions will do the rest of the work.

Now let me say something that I believe has been noticed or should be noticed. In this bill, we have specifically excluded the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Prison Service. The Defence Force does not arise for consideration because they have a special statute that deals with their promotion mechanisms. The question that you will no doubt ask is, "Are prison officers and police officers not also public servants?" "If they are also public servants, then why are we excluding them from the operation of this statute?" With good reason Sir. We do not think that in Parliament that we should take unto ourselves the role of second guessing the Services Commission of disciplined forces.

The matter of the promotion of a police officer or prison officer takes on much greater significance in terms of matters relating to national security and citizens safety then compared to the things that are the pursuit of other agents in the public service.

Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to suggest that other persons in the public service do not do jobs that are equally important. However, consider this scenario, for example, consider a police officer who has been acting in a post for three or more years, but has failed the polygraph test. Would you or anyone in this Chamber feel comfortable conferring on that individual an appointment by law in circumstances where there may be other important factors that might militate against the appointment? Mr. Speaker, I would not.

In relation to discipline forces, in relation to the police and in relation to the prison, because of the very sensitive nature of the post in those two organisations, we consider it important that the ordinary course of dealings with the Protective Services Commission should be allowed to carry on without interference.

There was an administration happily now past, that felt that they should interfere in the promotion prospects of people in the force and felt that they should sit in George Street determine who in the force should be promoted and to what post. They even felt that sitting in George Street they should do even after the election was won by the Barbados Labour Party in 2018. That is their want, that is their vent and that is how they do business. Not this Administration. Matters of citizen's safety and national security are of particular importance and need to be dealt with sensitively and therefore we are happy to exclude from the operation of this Bill the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Prison Service and I ask that you join me in recognising the special nature of those agencies and the appointments that are made thereto.

Mr. Speaker, now, I am beginning to land. I want to make the point that even though individuals are being appointed by virtue of this Act, we are not in any way attempting to denude the various public service commissions of their responsibility. The General Services Commission must get on with its work. This measure will give them a little breathing space. This measure will take somewhere between 1 000 and 1 500 people out of their immediate purview and I hope that that will be beneficial to them so that they get on with appointing the other people.

Mr. Speaker, you wonder why, I am sure the Leader of the Opposition wonders why I have to say between 1 000 and 1 500 people. Regrettably Mr. Speaker, the exact number of people who will benefit from this Bill is not yet known. We know the minimum amount, we know that it is going to at least 1 000 people, but the systems in the public service are so archaic that we found that it was impossible for anybody to hit a computer key and tell us this is the number of temporary people you have in post, this is the number of permanent people you have acting in post.

Now, it boggles the mind. I do not know and I wish I knew, why it is that with such a large number of employees, the public service is not fully computerised to the point where at the press of a button you could get an answer to the questions.

Mr. Speaker, none of us are here to berate the people in charge of the public service. I suspect that the size of the human relations department in a company like Sagikor probably has more people working in it that our public service. However, I do not think Sagikor employs 2 000 people, while the public service of Barbados employs 20 000. Now, I do not mean to suggest that you should have a HR officer for every 100, 1 000 or 2 000, but the fact is that our HR practices in the public service must be drive kicking and screaming into this century.

Our mistake, and it was a mistake that we did not have an opportunity to correct, was to perhaps feel back in 2007 that the solution was statutory. We felt that by having more transparent rules, better rules in relation to appointments and I remember the Public Service Bill has several schedules talking about how you appoint, hire and discipline people. All of those kinds of things are spelled out there, but we did not take steps to make sure that the particular department of Government that had to deal with it was given the adequate resources to do so. It is a task that is ahead of us and the Prime Minister I am sure will be taking steps in that direction.

Our Services Commission have done a good job. I believe that the Protective Services Commission have given me the assurance that they are going to resolve all the police promotions within the next three months. We are hoping that they can have it done in two months, but they

have said that they will give us all the appointments and so on within the next few months.

This Protective Services Commission, effective first of September, approved the appointments and appoint on promotion of 53 immigration officers in one fell swoop. They also did a similar thing in relation to Customs. I think the figure in Customs might be over 100 people. When you put the police to that you will see that the Protective Service's Commission is doing a remarkable job and I want to laud them for their efforts.

The point is that the Service's Commissions can and do work. We would not have been able to put these people into secure positions if they were not working but by getting rid of this backlog, we expect to be able to do more.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration has just announced a new housing programme which will see houses being made available to public servants who earn less than \$4 000 per month. I began by speaking about the commitment in the Manifesto: Helping People to Live. These individuals will now be able to go to a financial institution and say that they want a mortgage. As husband and wife would be able to say they want a mortgage or that they want it in their names so that they can get on with their lives and give the family the security needed.

What we are doing here today will empower well over a thousand people to be able to step into that direction proudly. We vow that we will correct the anomalies. Perhaps, the most important mechanism in this direction is a provision that we are borrowing from the original Public Service Act. We have been calling it the Levelling Provision. It provides that where a person who is now appointed when this Act is passed considers that they are prejudiced by the operation of this Act, they can approach the Governor-General, make a case and the Governor-General would be in a position or take a position on an appointment so as to remedy the prejudice.

An individual who states that his or her seniority has been prejudiced or prejudiced for numerous reasons, he or she can go through the process under the Public Service, make an appeal and the Governor-General will determine whether the person is prejudiced and if so, the remedy that is available. Sir, the point is that we borrowed this provision from the 2007 Bill because as far back as then, we recognised the importance of being able to correct prejudice. There is something called equity and they say that equity was created to moderate the harshness of the law.

Therefore, this provision which is to be found at Section 7(2) of the Bill is intended to give public officers who feel that they have been prejudiced, a right to say to the authorities to correct the prejudice. It is not anything to

be afraid of. It was a provision in the 2007 Bill but so important to us is the concept of fairness and the ability to moderate any of the anomalies or the effects of the imperfection that we consider this particular provision to be of great importance. We know people will fall through the cracks, but we must make sure we are there to capture them. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we spent a lot of time passing laws.

In many respects the public may have long forgotten what laws we passed but I dare say that what we do today will resonate among individuals in the Public Service. It will resonate with their families. It will resonate among the people with whom they must deal because for the first time there are being given the security that they deserve. Mr. Speaker, qualifications will not matter and that is important. We are not saying that you must be qualified at all. I know that may gall some people. I hope that right thinking Barbadians will see it our way though. An individual who has been working in a job steadfastly for years but then is told he or she cannot get the job because he or she does not have a degree is preposterous.

This Act says without the regard to the requirement for qualifications the job is yours. I can think of no nobler task. You could call it stopping poor people from being poor. You could call it transforming the Public Service. You can call it helping people to live. Whatever you call it, Sir, it is spelt with the same letters as the word, "decency".

I am obliged to you for your indulgence this morning, Sir. I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY: I beg to second that.

Bishop J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will briefly make some comments. Obviously, I am not going to oppose anything that seeks to bring redress to matters of disadvantage to public servants in Barbados. We are all aware that the system throws up some disadvantageous situations for people who seek to serve honestly and to pursue careers sometimes by deed of sacrifice as well. Yet, they find themselves up against the disadvantages thrown up by the system or operatives within the system. I am not going to on principle oppose anything that seeks to address that kind of situation and relieve persons from burdens and difficulties or challenges with which they have been faced.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it would be difficult to do so because one of the leading voices championing the causes of public servants in Barbados and making sure their interests are better served by the system is a voice that speaks very loudly and clearly in the Upper House on these matters, and that voice with which I am associated closely. Certainly, I would not be on my feet

seeking to oppose a measure that clearly is intended to correct an unfortunate situation that has existed for many and for several years as well. However, the Honourable Attorney General when he spoke suggested that the normal system of appointments in the Public Service did not work effectively and efficiently, and thereby frustrated the intention of the legislation of 2007; the Public Service (Amendment) Act.

It is an issue which we can debate if we chose so to do. I am only referring to the fact that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph stated his position on it which is that the normal system by which appointments are made regarding the Public Service did not function efficiently and effectively, and frustrated the intention of the 2007 legislation brought to the Parliament by this party when then in office. Therefore, one would have to issue a word of caution and be on one's guard that what obtains in this moment does not represent a permanent departure from the norm.

Expediency sometimes may drive us to take certain actions but when expediency is behind us, one would expect that we would resort to what is normal and expected. Though this Government has chosen to do this in this way and the Attorney General has attempted clearly to establish reasons for why so doing it is still to be considered a thing of concern that this departure, undertaken by an administration represented in this Honourable Chamber by such numbers is a concern that is real. I want to be understood clearly. I am not opposing the appointment of public servants who have obviously been disadvantaged, clearly over the years and I understand and I am secondly saying that the Government is suggesting that the normal system, the normal method of proceeding about this matter has not been functionally effective, therefore, out of expediency we take this root to correct the situation. On top of that, thirdly, I am expressing the caution and recognising this is a moment in which we ought to be on guard because you have a certain configuration in the Parliament of Barbados and you do not want to know that next week, or the week thereafter, or next month, we are coming back to the Parliament of Barbados and by force of numbers seeking to make department from that which is norm, which is expected, which is understood in the basis that perhaps it is not being expeditious in the expression of its function, whatever that it might represent and I hope that I am understood in that.

Mr. Speaker, there is, as with many things, with this coincidence of time. The Honourable Attorney General told that the Public Service Act of 2007 was brought here just on the eve of a 2008 General Election, short months before. It was brought here in a state of imperfection and perfection was not even sought for. It was simply brought here towards the end of 2007 and months before a pending General Election. I am not, I am not, I am not, I am not, I

am not, I am not, I am not ascribing, I am not, I am not ascribing motive. I am speaking to a coincidence of timing. I am speaking to the matter of coincidence of timing. I was over there when that measure was brought to the Honourable Chamber and would have supported it because it purported to express itself in the interests of public servants in Barbados. I am not therefore ascribing any motive of any sort to that Act in 2007. I am simply pointing, Mr. Speaker, to coincidence of timing because we are now in the throws, based on what we have heard here today, of an election exercise in Barbados, particularly in the constituency of St. George North. We have a matter like this being brought in this way using the mechanism of this Parliament to ensure that it is achieved on the eve of a by-election in St. George North and indeed, in the mind of some, on the eve of a General Election in Barbados not too far down the road. I am speaking about coincidence of time. The Honourable Attorney General would be aware that if you reflect that the Public Service Act of 2007 passed in this Parliament several years back and in the intervening period between then and now, we had another Administration in office. If you describe that Administration of being unable or unwilling to put into effect what was intended in the 2007 legislation then we come to a place where we have to ask ourselves: well then what of the last two and a half years? Why has there been sufficient time to put in place what was intended in 2007 and that for which you castigated the inactivity or inaction of the last Administration in the intervening 10 or so years, what has transpired over the last two and a half years that we have not been able to achieve that which was intended in 2007 using the normal mechanisms of appointment. I am speaking, Sir, about coincidence of time.

The Honourable Attorney General said he did not know, and no one can tell us, what are the numbers we are talking about? Is it 1 000 people, 1 500 people, we do not know, and no one can punch a key in a computer and tell us how many they are, and he laments that. If that is true, then it is to be lamented. The fact of the matter is this, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Attorney General may not know and the Honourable Speaker of this House may not know and the Leader of the Opposition certainly does not know, but I can bet you those out there who are affected by this know who they are. It is not so much, necessarily, that I must know who they are, or you must know who they are, or the Honourable Member for St. Joseph must know who they are, more importantly is that they know who they are and knowing who they are may tend to be indicative of how they are likely to vote in any election which comes around the corner, whether this month or not far from now.

I will say this and I will be more hated when I say this by the one or two on the Other Side who hate me, and they are just one or two, the rest of them love me. The date of 1st October has some significance. Do you know that dates have significance? Mr. Speaker, dates have

significance. We celebrate or commemorate 26th July as a day of significance. November 30th is certainly a day of significance and I will guarantee you that somewhere in the minds of a few people in this country there will be the thinking that the 1st October appointment date associated with this action will loom large in the minds of many. You may not think that, the Honourable Attorney General may not think that, the Leader of the Opposition may not, may not think that, may not think that but there are the Honourable Attorney General who was allowed to speak without being disturbed in anyway, may not think that, the Honourable Speaker of this House, a man of integrity and high mind may not think that, the Leader of the Opposition may not think that but there are just a few in Barbados who may think that this 1st October date is not just chosen by chance but is a deliberate attempt to associate that date with the passage of this legislation and that because of that coincidence of timing it may forever loom large in the minds of those who benefit from these appointments. Mr. Speaker, I am not going to say anything more on that at all.

Mr. Speaker, we speak to productivity in Barbados often. Very often we speak to productivity and the seeming lack of it in the private sector and often we say particularly so in the public sector and often when we do we fail sufficiently enough to speak to matters that conduce to productivity. If you look simply at the environmental issues that are now plaguing the land, several Government institutions and now affecting the schools, if we speak only to that, we do not stop long enough to ask ourselves how does the environmental context in which public servants are asked to give service affect their ability to be productive. I mean even with respect to one of the premier institutions of our Government system we do not even give enough attention to that. It is only when people are forced out and cannot attend Sittings of the House, it is only when people are sick and it begins to show, that is a fact... My voice has completely changed since I have been sitting in that space downtown in the Office of the Opposition. There are a lot of other symptoms which I also exhibit, and I know there are others who are affected. I am not seeking to reflect negatively on that situation, I am making the broader point that when we talk about productivity in the public service we do not pause long enough to give attention to the environmental conditions under which we ask public servants to give service in the country. Do you know when we start to do so? When they walk off their job. When they walk off their job, when they set down the files and when they leave their desks and the offices and the media is called in is when we pause to give attention to those things and often when we come to remedy many of those situations we see that a lack of a programme of proper maintenance of public facilities over the years has now rendered them dysfunctional and they have to be abandoned constituting to the build-up of wasted resources at the expense of the public purse in Barbados. We are talking about matters that conduce to productivity.

The Acting Director-General, the Ministry of Public Service, is quoted as saying something to the effect - and we all know this - that security of tenure greatly enhances the sense of motivation and sense of engagement that people feel. We expect people to feel motivated, to really feel engaged, to feel a sense of ownership, having a stake in the process and being a part of the enterprise in a productive and possible way but if we do not see to the treatment of the things that bother them...

Security of tenure is an absolutely critical thing and that is why despite this mechanism being used here today, despite the departure from the norm and even in the context where we express a caution going forward that we do not make this the way we do these things all of the time because of our numbers here in this Parliament, I am prepared to support an instrument that gives security of tenure to people.

Mr. Speaker, of course, when it comes to those who serve in this honourable institution there is no such thing as security of tenure although some might seem to think believe that is the case but a rude awakening may be on the way, but for public servants out there doing their best seeking to be productive we have to ensure that they get security of tenure so that as the Director-General would have said they can have a sense of proper motivation and a sense of engagement.

There are others who speak out of the bosom of the public service unions, there are others who speak out of the bosom of labour, who represent the leadership of labour in this country, and they speak to these things that frustrate people's efforts to be productive in their job and negate the efforts of the system itself to show itself as being one that is highly functional and providing a high level of service.

Intimidation: Mr. Speaker, can we honestly say that that is behind us and absent from the culture that obtains? We can come here and bring legislation, give people security of tenure and to do other things to improve their situation and that is good but on the other side of the issue we have to be sure that we do what we can to eliminate or as far as possible significantly reduce the issue such as intimidation. The threat of transfer is one which was made very quickly public of recent time where one man simply opens his mouth to speak to a matter of PPEs - is that what you call it, Mr. Speaker? -- the accessories and equipment necessary to ensure that you are properly protected personally and with the threat of the virus knocking around and raised some questions about that and in no time at all he was transferred way out down the road. That is illustrative of what happens in a culture and we must vow as people who are part of the political directorate that we would not give ourselves to that type of conduct where by force of power and position we want to intimidate people and use the threat of transfer. You know, Mr. Speaker, you

have been around long enough. You may be an innocent guy. I always say that but you know, you have been around long enough and you have heard the stories and they are legend and the power that be can put you at a desk and all you have is a telephone, no work whatsoever and you sit at a desk in your white suit every day because you got to come to work. The powers that be can do that to you and if they can do that to people at a fairly senior level in the public service you know what it can do to those who work down the ranks in the public service.

Mr. Speaker, you are an innocent guy. I might not be as innocent as you, Mr. Speaker, but I have been around long enough and close to the system long enough, perhaps a little longer than you, and I have seen expressions of that myself and I have seen clear cases of that myself and I have heard words uttered that were intended not to intimidate or simply to transfer but to destroy people and that should be removed from the system. There are enough honourable people - and I mean that in the very normal sense of its use and not in the conventional sense - in this House and in this Administration to push to ensure that that type of dynamic is destroyed in the culture around the public service in Barbados especially in terms of how the political directorate relates to it and that this business of trying to transfer and intimidation and all this kind of nonsense is put behind us.

The use of this ugly mechanism we call authority or approval is really a vicious thing when used against people even in the ordinary sense of its use. It is not the best kind of mechanism that we can have employed, but then when it is misused it becomes even more an ugly feature and spectre in the life and culture of the Public Service in Barbados.

We have people (and the Honourable Attorney-General spoke of the disciplined forces in Barbados) it also applies to them too, you have people with short stint approvals to work and those kinds of conducts are highly undesirable. Also in the wider public servants this is a thing that we need to get past and to find the means of putting behind us. However, all these things serve to demotivate people or to derail people, to discourage people from coming to give a true service to the public.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that job security could be used as a means of leverage against people, to bend them to your will, or to punish them, for being opposed to your views or your philosophy or your politics, that job security being a threat of it, the insecurity associated with your job could be used as leverage against you. We need to put behind us. Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the context therefore that type of thing I support the action, while expressing the caution that this should not be the way we normally do things because simply we have the numbers to do it. when casual workers are moved to the status of public officers, I applauded that

as part of the Administration that facilitated that as well, and I will support everything that the Honourable Attorney-General has said in relation to that, not only with respect to get capacity, to get mortgages, build families, build homes and all kinds of stuff, but I support that wholeheartedly. I do not know that there is a reasoned voice in Barbados that will say anything to contradict that. Hence, we want to see people established in this way. However, at the end of the day Mr. Speaker, Sir, the undergirding philosophy is, it is not about treating situations, it is not about changing regulations, it is not about improving systems, it is not about treating to physical facilities, at the end of the day, you know, the undergirding philosophy is, Mr. Speaker, Sir, (I am sure you know. I know you are a people's person) it is about the treatment of people; it starts there, the treatment of building is fine, treatment with reference to regulations, treatment with systems is fine, but the undergirding philosophy is that we have to treat people properly. Many Government workers sought you put people at the core and centre of its policy of its actions and will do so in the interest of the people and not make the interest of the people incidental to their own interest, or to its own interest.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Attorney-General spoke with reference to Custom Officers who were just established in a post (I cannot recall the details) but they have moved from a status of merely clerical officers to that status of Customs Officers. I applauded that move. I heard the Honourable Prime Minister speaking in her capacity as political leader of the Barbados Labour Party at a recent event, in a recent location, in the centre of Barbados speaking to this and the Honourable Member gave credit (passing credit) to that wide body of persons called the union. However if I know anything about the matter, I know that the one voice speaks loudly out of the others, (the Other Place, Mr. Speaker, Sir) and championed this cause and pointed to that anomaly (and pointed to that anomaly) and the Honourable Senator should be given credit for it, specifically, and it should not be clouded or flouted in any passing comment that attributes the credit to a wide circle of people called union leadership in Barbados -- one particular voice, one particular champion of this cause to get those people appointed and to have this legislation that gives the benefit of appointment to these folks, are also considered. Also, I think that credit should be given where credit is due.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, now the Honourable Member was appointed to that place by Her Excellency on the recommendation from myself and this also was referenced in a speech in that certain place in the centre of Barbados recently, and it was mentioned to illustrate that this business of union people being involved in political parties is not new, but I think why one move or why one is appointed, one's motivation when one accepts an appointment, is a critical thing. I will say this: that

gentleman who speaks from the Upper Place on the appointment through myself speaks in the interest of workers and have been given that mandate and helps us all in Barbados to a better understanding of the regulations around industrial relations. He has also been given the clear undertaking that your voice is to be heard in the interest of workers, even when your voice differs from mine, or even when your voice differs from the party with which you are associated, your role is to represent the workers interest and to give your opinion, even when it departs from the party's opinion to which you are associated or the voice of its leader. Also, I want to make that clear because that is important. Credit should be given where credit is due.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, not too long ago, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph also said that we have established certain posts through legislation in this Parliament, and that we did. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are certain people acting temporarily in these posts which have been established, but Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would want to scoff on any practice, any intention, that brings us to this point, where having established posts in which people have long been working, that you now say to those people who have been working in those posts that they now have to apply for the position and then by process of application/interview, whatever, they are caused to leave that position so that others might be facilitated into those posts which have now become established.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, were you able to follow all of that?

Asides.

Bishop J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will repeat it. The Honourable Attorney-General calls for a repeat because the Honourable Member does not understand. We were reminded by his very honourable voice that we have established some posts recently, the numbers of posts were clearly indicated as well. These are posts in which people have been working for years. I am saying that I am happy to applaud the establishment of posts but I would frown on, or scoff as it, any intention to, any practice of, any illustration of an instance where people who have worked in these posts (in temporary capacity) are now asked to be interviewed for the job, only to be eliminated by that process, and others brought into those posts. Now, that is clear English language, even a Combermere boy can understand it.

Asides.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me repeat that because I am not talking anything about October 1st. I am making a reference to that which the Honourable for St. Joseph also referred to himself. He said we brought legislation here a little while ago that established several posts, and that is correct, and it was a good thing to do. All

I am saying is I would scoff at any practice or intention, any instance where a person was serving temporarily for a long time in those positions which were not established, now you have established those posts people have been asked to apply for the jobs in which they have been working for a while and then by process of elimination they go out the door and you bring in your friends and supporters. If you do not understand that I can say it again.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: I will say it again if the Honourable Member does not understand that.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: On a Point of Elucidation or Clarification, let me make it clear. It is the Honourable Member who does not understand. Whether the post has been established last week, last month, 150 years ago, as long as you have been in it effective October 1 for three years, it is yours. There is no interview. We created posts in August and if anybody has been in those posts for three or more years, you are deemed to be in the posts. I am having difficulty trying to understand what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. As long as you fit the criteria, the post is yours. There is no interview, there is no application. Maybe there is a good reason why I am not understanding what he is talking about because neither does he.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I assure you I understand clearly what I am saying and there are those outside of here, if none in here, who understand what I am saying. I can introduce you to some, Mr. Speaker, who having seen posts in which they were working temporarily now established, have been asked to apply for those posts.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am not talking anything about "in this". He is understanding what he wants to understand. Who is he? He, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue, Honourable Member.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would depart perhaps a moment from this because there are those on that Side who seem to think that they can do what they please and get away with it. "He" is an accepted form of expression in English, a pronoun which refers to an identified person. If I have said "the Honourable Member for St. Joseph", if I have said "the Honourable Attorney

General”, I am entitled to say “he”. They do it from top to bottom, they do it in referring to him. They do it and nobody says anything. The point I am making and from which I will not be derailed is: You came in here a few months ago and you established posts and people were working temporarily in those posts, and all of a sudden those posts are established and you say one has to apply for the posts because one is temporary. Apply and then you are eliminated, and others can be brought into the now-established posts. I am talking about legislation a couple months ago. I understand what I am saying and if they do not, in due course they will. You can trust me on that one, Mr. Speaker.

There are a couple of things which I would like to say further. The Report of the Constitution Review Commission, the fourth Commission, made a recommendation which I consider to be one of significance. It had to do with the public officer and with reference to fundamental rights and freedoms. If I may quote briefly, Mr. Speaker, at 12.62:

“The attention of the Commission was drawn to Section 21 (2)(c) which permits restrictions upon public officers or members of the disciplined forces in the enjoyment of freedom of assembly and association, particular to form of belong to political parties or to form or belong to trade unions or other associations for the protection of their interests. 12.63: Sections of the Public Service most affected by this provision readily concede that unrestricted freedom to engage in partisan politics by all public officers, especially senior public officers involved in policy formulation and execution, could lead to serious conflicts of interest and awkwardness at certain levels and result in great and unwelcome compromises to the impartiality of the Public Service.”

Sir, it goes on to cite that there are parties who, aggrieved by this, argue that there are some categories of public servants who are not affected by the Sections in as serious a manner as other public servants. For instance, persons who are employed by statutory corporations and other state-owned and para-statal organisations are generally not prevented from participating in partisan politics. The discrimination, they contend, affects adversely some of the most talented, competent persons within the country, and this is seen as a woeful waste and patent loss to the political and electoral process.

Sir, I am going to skip down to the recommendation at 12.69, and it reads:

“Restrictions on the fundamental rights of persons should be limited to persons and circumstances where contingencies relating to a specific post make such terms and conditions of service reasonable and justifiable.”

Mr. Speaker, all that is saying -- persons can refer to it in the Forde Constitution Review Commission Report -- is that there are some categories of public servants who should not be prevented, in terms of the expression or the claim on their fundamental rights and freedoms, from participating in the political process. I support that and I want to state here clearly from this side that it is something which should be looked at. One can understand certain Public Service positions being prohibited from participating in the political process but certainly that should not be a general prohibition. There are talents there are skills. There is certainly the passion and the hearts to be found in the bosoms of many in the Public Service who would like the opportunity to openly participate in the political process, and it would not necessarily their ability to serve the people of Barbados. I want to put that on record, Sir.

There was also a call made way back in 2004, and that, I think, came out of the Report of the Nation Commission of Law and Order headed by Sir Roy Marshall. The call was that there should be some form of Public Service College or institution established in Barbados, and there should be an effort to mount a college, a facility, an entity that caters to and affect the proper training of public servants. I support that suggestion in principle. I make a call for that. There have been a lot of people who have been exiting the Public Service in recent years. I have heard many a comment to the effect that people are disaffected with the goings-on in the Public Service for various reasons; some of them related to political dynamics, et cetera. People have been opting to go on early retirement. I have heard comments even from people in Government -- the last Administration as well as this one -- about the deteriorating quality of the service offered by the Public Service in Barbados. I am not critiquing that; I am saying I have heard those comments. I am also saying that the public service is a critical entity in what we do, the biggest employer of labour in Barbados and if we are talking about improving the quality of service then we have to talk about improving the skills of those who serve in the public sector in Barbados. Some form of institution or facility that caters to that. That though is to me desirable and people benefit from academic training in other institutions.

However, I believe that the public service requires a certain kind of ethos and provides a certain kind of service which is critical to what we have seek to achieve in terms of national developmental goals and critical as well to the better performance of private sector and investment interest. Public service can therefore benefit from specialised training.

Of course, anything you conceive of might come with a cost but there are ways of treating to the cost. There is now widespread availability of all of kinds of

technologies. Perhaps as the commission did in fact recommend that it is something that could be pursued in the context of the region and other area of functional corporation and perhaps it could be an institution through which the Barbados itself can earn foreign exchange through others who come or who come under the purview or who come under the training offered by the type of institution.

I believe it is something to be considered. You cannot simply be thinking of how we can make the public servants feel a little bit better so we can catch a vote or two. I think we also must be thinking how we can make them better so that they can improve themselves and improve the service and thereby improve the country.

Mr. Speaker, unless I offend further, I think I am going to stop.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Hon. C. E. JORDAN: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I do not know what pronoun to use with the last speaker because they have spent a lot of time talking about pronouns like he and him. I am not sure but the last speaker who is the Honourable Member for St. Michael West talked about friends and having a few friends over here. I just want to bring to his attention Luke 6 guides the Barbados Labour Party and we love our enemies, so he does not have to worry about whether or not he is loved on this side.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill that we debate today is an important one for a number of reasons. I will begin by saying that the principle reason why this Bill is important is that it is the right thing to do. The Labour Party operates based on that principle and not to be distracted but just to speak to the question of why now, why not in the first two and a half years. I just want to remind the people of Barbados through you Mr. Speaker, because I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael West wants to forget and I get the impression that he wants to cause people to forget that we have spent the first year and a half stabilising this country. The people of this country who I interact with recognise that we have spent the first year and a half stabilising the situation that we came into office and found.

Mr. Speaker, because almost without fear, people say to me, man we know that we would have been really on the way up but COVID came. After one year and a half, so around or about the beginning of this calendar year, we then had to address our minds to dealing with a real situation, a situation that has caused the death of, is it one million?

Asides.

Hon. C. E. JORDAN: One million persons globally. All the commentators say is that that number is probably an underreported number because they may be others who have not been captured because they were not tested. Hence, we have one year and a half stabilising the economy because we recognise like all democratic socialist recognise and understand, that in order to create a better life for our people we need to make sure that we can pay and support that better life. We have to make sure that the economy is put in a position that allows us then to take off and move.

At the airport, we are about to do some work on the runway. It is going to happen at some point. Mr. Speaker, the reason why you have to make sure the runway is good is because a plane cannot fly before it takes off. It has to take off in order to fly, and so the runway has to be good.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent a year and a half making sure that the runway is good. In that year and a half, while stabilising the economy, we were also able to give public servants a five per cent pay increase. We said to public servants in our campaigning that we were so committed to giving that increase that even if we could not reach an agreement we would go ahead and give the increase anyway while we were still in discussion. That is what we were doing in the period leading up to this point.

We are now approximately halfway during this financial year and I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael West still remembers how the financial year works, he understands that this is now six months into the year. I believe he still understands. Sometimes from his utterances I almost said ramblings, but that will not be nice, but sometimes from his utterances I get the impression that he is either forgetting or wants not to remember.

However, halfway during the financial year is always a time, well it is usually a time because the ten years of the last Government is not really anything that we could use to gauge good governance by. Under normal circumstances this is the point in time when we would make assessments about significant moves going forward. Hence the choosing of this time is not mysterious, it is not something that was delayed, and it is not something that should be postponed. It is the right thing to do and this is the time that we are going to do it.

The public service in Barbados has been described using all kinds of terms. One of the terms that I heard just before coming into office and then taking up the role of a Minister in Government was the word "Hollywood". People both in the Public Service and in the public domain said that when everyone talks to you or send a letter, states the person is "acting" in their position. I have been told by a number of persons that the only place there are so many actors is in Hollywood.

Asides.

Hon. C. E. JORDAN: Mr. Speaker, we are not to hear asides, but my left ear heard something just now. Regarding the matter of our numbers in this Honourable Chamber, I want to make something very clear to this Honourable Chamber. The people of this country spoke in May 2018 and not only did they speak in a way that conferred on the BLP 30 seats which comprise of all the

seats in this Honourable Chamber but when we compare what took place in May 2018 with what took place in 1999 when the result was 26 to 2, what we realise in 2018 is that the proportion of people who voted and made the statement was significantly greater.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you and those who voted that they were sending a clear message. They were saying to us the following two things:

- First, the people who were there almost destroyed the country and rubbished this country; and

- Second, we are putting you in office, not in power, to correct the wrongs of that Administration.

I am very clear. The people in St. Peter say that to me. Talking to people from across the country, this is what they have said. When I say to them that there are certain things that it becomes difficult to move quickly, do you know what they say to me? They tell me that we have the numbers and that they have put us in there to fix that.

This is what the people are saying about this matter of persons not being appointed and left to act. I have officers in my Ministry who I have tried to persuade that when we are in meeting talking to people, try not to say acting because it sounds so unprofessional to me. I am introducing officers from my Ministry and I ask them to introduce themselves. He or she states Administration Officer I (Acting). He or she states Chief (Acting). It does nothing positive for the mental outlook for the person saying it and this Government is very careful to recognise that we have a responsibility to people and treat them as human beings. We must recognise that people want to lead fulfilled lives.

They want to contribute to the building of the country. They want to contribute to their own development. They want to contribute to the development

of their families, so we have to treat them like human beings. I will say every time I speak that I hate the word "labour" because human beings who are at work in the Public Service are not just providers of labour. They are human beings who wake up in the morning who have to make breakfast or stop by a shop and buy a few fishcakes,

like the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, that he shares with me from time to time.

I am saying that because he does not make breakfast but that he likes fishcakes. There are some people who do that in the morning because we are human beings and have to treat the public servants of this country as the human beings that they are. The Honourable Attorney General spoke to the 2007 Act and in many instances, Mr. Speaker, as the successor Member of Parliament of the Prime Minister who drove that 2007 legislation while leading the BLP, I feel and recognise in my body and mind that what we are doing here today is really completing some unfinished business. It is completing some unfinished business.

We talk about timing. Well we do not talk about timing, but the Honourable Member for St. Michael West talks about timing. The 2007 legislation came just before the general election. This BLP has determined that we are not going anywhere close to another general election before we do something that is so right and in order for the people of this country. This time has come. We are cleaning up or tidying up that unfinished business because all that we talk about Government being a continuum, the last Administration did not have the decency to recognise that Government is indeed a continuum.

Therefore, when a Government that you succeed has decent good legislation enacted and, on the books, you really have a responsibility after the people have voted for you to keep faith with those people. The last Government did not do it. It falls to us to clean up

the unfinished business of our previous Administration when the BLP formed the Government leading up to early 2008. There are some people who can go to the bank, apply for a loan, get asked for a job letter, go to their employer, and get that job letter, both in the private sector and Public Sector. Mr. Speaker, the persons to whom this Bill applies are not able to enjoy something as basic and as fundamental as that.

The ability to get a loan in order to improve your house, buy land or buy house and land and to do those things that we consider necessary to improve our lot in life, these people are not able to benefit from that. It is ridiculous that a person could be working in Government for 5, 7, 10 or 12 years and not be in a position where they can comfortably improve their situation. This is an indecency that this Government will not tolerate. Therefore, this morning we come to this Honourable Chamber to change that. We are not going to allow the good workers of this country to have to suffer through that kind of a situation.

Even though we are in the midst of a pandemic and earlier in this Sitting you read a proclamation from Her Excellency, we are not going to allow even the pandemic that has killed over a million people to stop us from treating public officers like human beings. The uncertainty that not being appointed in genders allows for all kinds of bad feelings, mischief, it creates a lot of issues in the industrial relations climate because persons who are not appointed, if they feel hard done by are cautious about bringing bad treatment to the fore. They do not want to speak up because they are not sure of what will happen, what will be done about their tenure because they are not appointed so it causes people sometimes to suffer in silence and people should not have to live through that. That acting situation over such a prolong period demotivates workers and so, Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation whatsoever in supporting this Bill before this Honourable Chamber this afternoon.

There are a number of elements to the Bill. The learned Attorney General spoke about many of the important ones, but I want to repeat Section 5(3) of this Bill. The matter of supernumerary office and I am glad the Honourable Member for St. Joseph explained it. He is one who is very good at language and some of these words I cannot even pronounce properly but I do know that this Clause is one of the most important clauses in this Bill because, as the Honourable Member said, there used to be a time and if you speak to the trade unions, particularly the one that represents most of the public officers in this country, and I want to applaud the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW) in this regard. I, as I thought about the union, thought about a parable in scripture which sometimes we would refer to either as the importunate widow or the unjust judge. I am a little bit careful in using that parable because there is both the importunate widow and the unjust judge, but I want to be very clear. I consider the NUPW to be the importunate widow. They have been persistent in pushing for this. The unjust judge would have been the last Government who did not take them on. We have come to office to make wrong things right, but I want to congratulate the NUPW for their work in pushing this agenda and to say to them what I know they have recognised. This is a true Barbados Labour Party (BLP), this is the original Barbados Labour Party (BLP), this is the true Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and I think the NUPWW, I know they cannot say it publicly probably, but I know they will understand this is a party that they can speak to and speak with.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph spoke to the Customs Officer IV. I remember well when that decision was taken, we sat in the Senate Chamber in Bridgetown and they represented that these officers were doing the work for many, many years, classified, I think, as clerical officers, but doing the work. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, Honourable Prime Minister, as the

successor to the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) leaders from the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams determined on that occasion that it was an injustice that needed to be corrected as quickly as possible and we are able to say today, that those officer have been appointed and even though we had to create the position of Customs Officer IV to make sure that they were treated with the dignity with which they deserved to be treated, but the matter of the supernumerary officer, public officers had to wait until there was a vacancy and, Mr. Speaker, in spite of the ramblings you heard just before I started to speak, it is true that the wheels of Government turn very slowly and there are people who are left “hanging” for want of a better word on to a hope. They are working one year after another, after another, after another, but they cannot be appointed because they are told there is no vacancy, not because there is no work to be done, because the people are turning up every day and are doing an honest day’s work but there is no vacancy that has been created and so they cannot be appointed because you cannot be appointed where there is no vacancy. This Clause in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, moves pass that very inhumane approach to industrial relations and human resource management. It says that if you have been working in your position for three years, it means that your work is necessary because if it was not necessary you would not be there for three years and if your work is necessary and if it is not project based, in other words, if you are not working in a situation that has a clearly defined beginning and end, it means that you are necessary in the position and so this Bill, once passed in both Houses of Parliament will say to those public officers, will say to the Ministry of the Public Service that you have been acting, you have been doing the work, then your post has been created. It is deemed to have been created, you are appointed in the post. Mr. Speaker, I think that is a revolutionary aspect of this Bill and like the Honourable Attorney General said, it is probably what was missing in the 2007 Bill, but we have sought because life is about growth, life is about improvement, life is about making sure that if you make a mistake in the past you can correct it in the future. While we make no claims to perfection or omniscience we are clear that once we identify weaknesses, once we identify errors, we will make the decision to make the correction as we move forward and so that has been corrected and I think we are now on a good path to make sure that the workers of this country are taken care of in the decent way that they ought to be taken care of.

I want quickly, Mr. Speaker, before I close, just to mention a few things. There are some issues in the public service that have to be corrected. There are issues of productivity, and in my almost two and a half years working in the public service and with public officers, I have recognised that some of the issues of productivity have to do with leadership in the public service. There are good workers in the public service, excellence workers. As a matter of fact, when became Minister responsible for

labour and social partnership relations, as part of my orientation my officers, showed me some of the work that has been done by the Ministry and by other ministries and I said to them, but the public does not know about a lot of this work that you have been doing. One of the weaknesses in the public service is that there seems to be, while there is not officially, there is some secrecy shroud that stops the public service from sharing a lot of the information widely, known to a few sometimes but now shared widely, so there are a lot of good people and there is good productivity but there are challenges still and some of those challenges have to do with the leadership within the public service, and I want to call for a greater focus on the training of those who will lead in the public service. Persons called to serve cannot become leaders only because they have been in a position for the longest period. There are a number of areas, and the Service Commission Public Service Regulations of 1978 speaks very clearly to this, that have to be taken into consideration: General fitness, seniority, basic educational qualifications, special courses of training, letters of commendation, duties to which the person has knowledge and duties that you are fit for that fall within the duties of the post so that seniority is only one of the areas.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for leaders to be real leaders. My father told me on a number of occasions that there are persons 40 years old who have 40 years of experience and there are people 40 years old who have one year's experience 40 times. Not everybody who has been around long is capable of going to the next step. We have to get to the point in the public service, if we are to modernise, if we are to move forward, if we are to move the country to the point where, as we have agreed, where we are the best place in the world to live, to work, to do business, to enjoy life and to retire ultimately. If we are to reach that stage, then we have to recognise that in all areas of our country's activity including in the public sector leadership is going to be important and that leadership must be leadership that is equipped to motivate, to coach, to guide and to be effective so that is an area that needs to be focused on.

Mr. Speaker, I have recognised that the lack of leadership is holding back some good public officers who want to soar, who want really to contribute to nation building but are held back by people who feel that their incompetence is going to be shown up. There are not many of them but there are enough to cause us to have to pay some attention to that area: Leadership and allowing younger or more capable even sometimes older people to really do what they are supposed to do.

Mr. Speaker, there is an area that I must speak to before I sit, and it relates directly to this matter of people who are acting. A lady came to my house on Friday night, on Sabbath, in tears. She has been working since 2014 I think but she is still not appointed. She came to me in tears

because she went to the bank on the 25th, on Friday, and there was nothing in the bank by way of salary. Mr. Speaker, that hurt me but it is not the first time that I have heard those stories and I want to say here very, very clearly to those people responsible for paying the public officers of this country that it is reprehensible, because nasty is not a good word to use in this Honourable Chamber but that is the way I feel about it, for a person who is guaranteed to go to the bank on payday and find a salary not to be interested in ensuring that others who do not have the luxury of having been appointed can also go to the bank on the day appointed and find salary. That young lady lives in a house with three other people. She is the only breadwinner, and she had no money in her account. It has happened to her before. She is now come into a situation where the credit union that she is a member of will not extend any more credit because her credit history is not good and her credit history is not good not because she does not have a job but because she is not being paid on time. This Barbados Labour Party Government - and the reason why I am so happy and proud to be both a member of this party and a member of the Government constituted by this party - is a party that faces these issues frontally and so even though some may say it reflects on us because we are in Government, it is a matter that is causing people issues and so it is a matter that we will speak to and address and I just want to put those persons responsible on notice that we are not prepared to allow this kind of a situation to continue. It is mistreating people and it is not being fair to the ordinary hardworking public officers of this country who are not yet appointed and who will hear from time to time that their names dropped off of SmartStream or whatever it is. That is just not the way you treat people, and this Government is all about treating people properly.

Once this is enacted, the Ministry of the Public Service, the Attorney-General mentioned this as well, has to move swiftly... The Honourable Member already spoke to that but I am adding my voice to say to the Ministry of the Public Service - once this is passed we would have cleared a significant portion of backlog - that once this is done the Ministry of the Public Service has to get on with the work of dealing both with the anomalies that the Honourable Attorney-General has already identified but also with the regular work of appointing people once they have been in the service for a particular period of time. Mr. Speaker, that is why we have not changed the 2007 legislation and have brought a separate piece of legislation because that legislation is still enforced and so the Ministry of the Public Service has a responsibility to the human beings who are working in the public service in the service of this country to make sure they are treated properly and that they are treated in accordance with the laws of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I have said enough in respect of this piece of legislation. As one of the people's

representatives chosen to speak on the behalf of workers I commend this Bill to this Honourable Chamber I commend this Bill to the workers of this country and I commend this Bill to the organisations who speak on the behalf of the workers of this country and say to them that this is not the end of the road, that as we recognise deficiencies in the treatment of workers, we will continue to bring to this Honourable Chamber any necessary pieces of legislation or any amendments to existing pieces of legislation that will seek to improve the lot of workers in this country so that they, Mr. Speaker, Sir, can get on comfortably with their work, with leading fulfilled lives, and with contributing significantly to the building of a better Barbados. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business, you have the Floor.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I now beg to move that this Sitting be suspended, to be resumed at 2.30 p.m. this afternoon.

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

The question that the Sitting be now suspended until 2.30 p.m. was put and was resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give Notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$16 607 700 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2020-2021 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 6 2020-2021.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R.R. STRAUGHN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to join this debate and to give my support to the Bill before the Chamber. I listened very carefully to the presentations by the Honourable Members today and I am

proud to say, Sir, that this piece of work before this Chamber is significant in many ways. I want, Sir, first just to remind the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, specifically on Page 45, Sir, spoke to the establishment of a college for the Public Service with an established educational tertiary institution for the strategic retraining of our public servants. Just to remind the public through you, Sir, and him as well, during his presentation it would have appeared as if he had forgotten that that was a commitment of this Government upon coming to office, as stated in our Manifesto, and I would like to remind him that this Government has been from the very beginning consistent with respect to its treatment of workers.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter has already indicated certainly the track record with which this Government has executed in the last two and a half years or so of assuming office in this country, Sir. It would be remiss of me, Sir, not to mention and to just clarify something because, like the Honourable Member for St. Peter, I was at the meeting at Parliament as it related to the issues with the Customs Department, but before the meeting which we all had at Parliament I would have, upon being appointed Minister in the Ministry of Finance, led the negotiations in relation to the five per cent increase with the public servants and the unions and workers' representatives at that time. Sir, I recall even from those very early days all the interventions which I have had with the unions, including the National Union of Public Workers as well as the Barbados Workers' Union. They all made representation consistently, as you would appreciate, Sir, in those early days with respect to the Customs Department.

Sir, I am going to spend some time there specifically for a few minutes just to remind the public, through you, Sir, that when we came to office the Customs Department was embroiled in a very long and protracted purported move to the Barbados Revenue Authority, and because of that a number of issues relating to the terms of conditions of those working within the Customs Department were left unattended. Sir, the previous Government was hell-bent on moving it to the Barbados Revenue Authority, so when we came to office, notwithstanding the challenges with respect to the finances of Government, there was literally no morale at all within the context of the Customs Department.

Sir, as part our Manifesto -- I would remind the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, if he would reflect on Pages 44 and 45 -- that there is a section dealing specifically with public sector management. One of those Manifesto pledges was that we would rescind the decision to incorporate the Customs Department into the Barbados Revenue Authority because we understood that the Customs and Excise Department was a critical institution with respect to the function of not only the operation of

Government's revenue collection but also, in a real sense, business and trade facilitation and equally with respect to the national security interests of the country. Therefore, Sir, we felt it was important then and we still do now, such that we have already embarked on a very ambitious reform within the Customs Department, and therefore these were some of the key things which we indicated prior to coming to office and that we have been executing over the last two and a half years.

Sir, the reality is that having achieved a measure of stability and COVID notwithstanding, we had to achieve a level of stability in order to start to build out a number of the reforms and pledges that we could have made in our Manifesto. It is instructive, Sir, that because of the protracted move or proposed move from Customs to the Barbados Revenue Authority and the lack of investment in personnel within the Customs Department, persons got fed up, some people retired and others went to other departments in Government simply because there was very little attention being paid to those officers and to the department, Sir. Matters like these which we are seeking to remedy today -- I want to reiterate what the Honourable Attorney General has made quite clear already -- in no way would prevent the normal appointment of public officers, and therefore it is conceivable that that work will continue but it is critical that we assess the backlog of what is required in order to be able to deal with that substantively.

Sir, the reality is that over the course of the last two years the management of the public finances and the way that appointments -- if you wish -- were handled in the context of the statutory emoluments versus the OPE has not been a very tidy exercise. I can say that because when we engaged during the Estimates of last year and we just looked at the payroll of Government, on the face of it one would have assumed that because persons were working in a particular Ministry, they were being paid from that Ministry, Sir. However, when we examined the data, we recognised that it was not as clear-cut as one might have imagined. As a result of the rotation of personnel around the system, it made it a little difficult sometimes to keep track of exactly where people are appointed, Sir, but where you may have been actually working was another story. Therefore, Sir, what we want to be able to do is just regularise this process and make it easier for us to be able not just to appoint people but to bring some measure of regularity to the operations of Government and certainly, in the context of the Ministries themselves, to be able to chart a clearer path for succession planning, Sir. At the end of the day, any institution and any Government, company or even any family seeks to have some measure or plan for success such that whatever activity they are engaged in can be continued, Sir.

This means, one, investing in people and, two, ensuring that the terms and conditions under which persons

are employed are actually conducive to their being able to execute the objectives or mission of the department of the Ministry or what have you.

Sir, that is absolutely important, because one of the very disturbing things that certainly would have accompanied the lack of continuity to which the Honourable Member for St. Peter referred to in his presentation, is that part and parcel as we know we would say in public service, your authority may expand Sir, and you are reverted back to a different post. Sometimes you are moved back to where you were from. Sir that disrupts to some degree the normal operations of the Ministry's departments or what have you.

Therefore, by seeking to bring some regularity to this process, Sir it will in turn mean not that we only give certainty with respect to the employees, but I think we give a better prospect for management of the institutions themselves to be able to have available the appropriate resources to be able to execute Government's mandate.

Sir the truth is, this extremely important because the people elected and expect of all 30 of us in here to change things. This is essentially part of the change that is required in order to move the country forward in this the 21st century.

Sir, the truth is, it is not just an investment in people. It is an investment in technology, but change management is critical as part of any of this exercise to take route. The Attorney General and certainly the Honourable Member for St. Peter made it quite clear, that the way that we promote persons, the way that we assess people's performance, the way that we hold people accountable will be just as important as the actual delivery of service that the public will expect from any of our departments. Whilst we are here to regularise, if you like, the terms and conditions of a number of persons, I do not want to use the word acting, but who would have been working substantively in post for a number of years, we want to bring regularity to that.

Sir, what is important now is to ensure that we put the systems in place to be to assess people's performance objectively and to make determination for promotions on the basis of that action, such that it does not matter whether you think you are senior, junior or whatever the case is, competence must be a critical part of the succession plan of Government. Therefore, we have to address this frontally as part of the change within the context of not just the public service but the way that we are delivering whether it is a public good or service to the taxpayers of this country.

This is a good thing, but inherently it is the change management that is required within the rest of the service to ensure that we can actually deliver better to all the people or taxpayers of Barbados. Sir that will mean a

change in thinking to some degree. Sir, because the truth is, if it is one thing that COVID-19 should have taught everybody globally, is that we cannot take anything for granted.

Therefore, our ability to deliver the best possible service ever, no matter what it is that you are doing is so critically important, simply because circumstances can change at any time. Even though we are talking about making appointments within the context of the public service and I am positive that as we speak there are still thousands of Barbadians who are out of work and still uncertainty with respect to the resumption of their normal job prospects.

Therefore, against that backdrop, it means that those persons for whom this will give some measure of certainty with respect to those circumstances, they must be conscious that in the context of the wider Barbados economy that we all must ensure that we pull our weight and do the things that are necessary to bring about the effective change within the context of the public service so that Government can be seen as leading or working alongside the public sector to be able to truly transform this country.

Whilst I fully support the provisions in this Bill to give certainty to public servants, that certainty is only relative to the context of the rest of the Barbados economy being able to resume in full, but that the public service and certainly we as a Government give the commitment to the country that we must improve internally the assessment of people's performance on Government. We must hold people accountable in order to ensure that we get the best outcomes with respect to not just the representation or workers, but we give people an opportunity to know that there is a clear sense of a career path upon which once they set about that path that they are capable of rising and leading critical parts of Government's work in this country.

Sir, now it is equally important that against the stability economically that we have been able to achieve, having done the hard work over the first 18 months of assuming office, a lot of the reforms that are critical to move Government forward in the context of the public service that we really must deconstruct and reconstruct all of our processes. I am very proud to say that over the course of the last two and a half years, this Government certainly working with the unions as I indicated, would have made representation with respect to appointments, both the National Union of Public Workers and the Barbados Workers' Union. Both unions have been equally quite strident with respect to those matters.

The reality is that this is still an ongoing process, but we give our commitment that we will resolve these matters to ensure persons that when they come to work and give of

their best at work and they deliver what they are supposed to deliver, they will suitably treated with respect not just to the terms and condition but certainly with respect to the payment.

I want to just spend some time on that because there are too many stories of the way that things are administered in Government where people are working and not being paid. The Honourable Member for St. Peter raised the issue quite rightly because in an age of technology, there is really no excuse for persons going to work in Government or anywhere for that matter, but certainly not far less than Government going to work and being uncertain as to when they will be paid. That is something that this Government intends to remedy, because it is something that should never happen in this country. Therefore, we give our commitment that as we work through not just the fact of dealing with appointments, but the internal administration of each department.

Whilst there is a central function in the Personnel Administration Division which I think most persons would be aware of, each department in Government has to all equally update its own internal procedures to ensure that when they have persons working in their sections, the efficient transfer of information between PAD and the individual department will see that when persons turn up for work and they put in work that there no doubt that persons will be paid.

Sir that is something that this Government will give the commitment to resolve. There must be a technological solution that allows for the seamless transition of information. Whether it is the delegation of the authority with respect to the Permanent Secretaries to be able to deal with those local issues.

However, Sir, I believe that substantively, once we are able to deal with this backlog of appointments and all of the other administrative matters and that we can deal with whatever disciplinary matters that they have, that with the right and appropriate investment in technology, coupled with the experience of the staff, not just in PAD but certainly a number of departments also have personnel officers, which I think once deployed effectively, can allow for a smoother transition of information. This will mean that we will be better able to administer some of these functions with respect to the way that payroll, as well as other matters in relation to workers' terms and conditions are managed.

It is equally important from a budgetary perspective because what this will now do is that having established these posts effective October 1st, it gives us an opportunity as the Ministry of Finance starts to issue pre-Budget ceilings for next financial year and as we upgrade from Smart Stream to CloudSuite to start to ensure that with our

forward planning for Estimates 2021 that we have a cleaner process with respect to the way that the Ministries are organised from a personnel perspective. Therefore, the Ministry of Public Service will be certainly working in conjunction with the Treasury in the Ministry of Finance to ensure that process is streamlined going forward.

Therefore, when we look at the Schedule of Personal Emoluments, we will have close to absolute clarity or absolute clarity in terms of what are the exact posts in Government, whether they are statutory or temporary in the context of OPE and allowing us to truly understand what is the cost with respect to Government in terms of its workforce. Sir, that is critically important because as we seek to ensure that we address equally the pension reform which is already ongoing in Government, it means that it gives us a settled process with respect to the administration of some of those issues as well which is certainly one of the bugbears with respect to the way the appointments process would have been dealt with.

There are many instances where upon retirement, there is often some contention about how long you acted in a post and exactly what would qualify you for your pension. Therefore, this is just one aspect of being able to clean that up. We would anticipate that we will have better information going forward with respect to ensuring that calculation of pension benefits certainly would not take as long as it currently does. Therefore, this process coupled with an upgrade of the various technology, if you like Sir, would allow for a smoother exit from the Public Service where person would be able to retire comfortably knowing that one does not have to wait a protracted period of time before your pension benefits are actually paid to you.

The truth is that while it is not necessarily the norm, there are a few instances where it happens. The truth is that in the same way that there is uncertainty

with persons who are acting in positions, there is equally for some persons when they reach retirement uncertainty as well. We want to give public servants and their families as much certainty as we can give in an environment like this. However, the reality is that this Bill before the Chamber is just one part of the reform exercise that is intended with respect to the management of the Public Service.

I cannot stress enough that in 21st Century in which we are, there is certainly no going back. This drive to continually upgrade our procedures and review how we can deliver things better is part of Government's commitment to transform Barbados. The Public Sector is in need of reform. As a matter of fact, there has been an office of Public Sector Reform for some time now. The truth is that over the course of the last few years, we have done quite a

bit in terms of being able to bring some measure of regularity if you like, Sir, to the Public Service.

I want to speak now on Customs because when much of the representation from the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW) and the Barbados Workers Union (BWU) as I met with them to deal not only with matters related to Customs but with the Barbados Revenue Authority (BRA), they made representation about the fact that there were a number of officers working as Clerical Officers within the Customs Department for a number of years. As I would have indicated that because of the proposed move into BRA, there really was no plan to continue to train Customs Officers.

It basically fell, Sir. As a result, in part, these persons who would ordinarily have been trained along the way found themselves in a sense working as Customs Officers without having the designation as a Customs Officer. When you really think about it, these are persons that were in the department through, I suppose, working on the job and trained internally with respect to Customs procedure. Certainly, they know the area and the reality is that we took a decision at the meeting chaired by the Prime Minister as indicated earlier, consequentially 72 permanent or temporary clerical officers for the record are now designated as Clerical Officer III with respect to the department.

Why is that important, Sir? As you know, if you are given a title of Clerical Officer in theory, you can take that person from the Customs Department and put them somewhere else. Obviously, Customs is a specialised department and, therefore, because of the lack of investment and attention given to the department by the previous Administration, we took a decision that we would re-designate those persons with a commitment that the official training would resume to allow those persons to be adequately qualified given that there was a lack of investment in training as far as that department is concerned.

This is part of the transformation, Sir, and the support that we have been giving to the Customs Department precisely from the perspective that we had a lot of uncertainty with respect to the proposed move to the BRA which this Government stopped. The department is now relatively settled because of those decisions that we have taken. We have been able to work with the unions and the staff to ensure that we can set about a process whereby we could implement successfully last year ASYCUDA World which because of the protracted nature of what was going on before, took five years to implement.

Once we made the decision, it was a six-month implementation with respect to the Government making the commitment to move the Customs Department in a

completely different direction. This Government while looking at how the remainder of Government is operating has taken the decision that rather than wait for the traditional, if you like, process to take root that it is important now that we clear this backlog and let us then focus on what are those critical issues that seem to be clogging up the system such that these administrative matters presented to us do not consume the time of the PAD.

The Ministry of Finance will continue to work with the Ministry of the Public Service to ensure that going forward there is a continuous cleaning of the data, if you would like, Sir, respect to the terms and conditions of public officers. That is important equally. The process is being developed where that conversation piece between finance and the public service will be a lot smoother because I think it is important, Sir, that we appreciate that where we understand the staffing requirements of Government it means then that we are better able to make the necessary provisions for Government going forward, therefore, a review of what is required to run the public service will have to be undertaken, Sir, in addition to the reforms that we have already announced in terms of the establishment of the different commissions to deal with specific elements of the public service. It means then that from our perspective, strategically, we have to ensure we are recruiting for the future with respect to being able to ensure that the kind of services as well as the quality of services that the public would expect from its Government that the Government can deliver but that means, Sir, that internally we must ensure that we are recruiting, promoting and deploying all available resources within Government to be able to meet that mandate. The truth is, Sir, this is not simple work because 1) it means that all persons would have to be exposed to the appropriate training that will give them, I suppose, the best edge to be able to execute their work. You have heard, certainly, the Prime Minister announce that we have established the National Transformation Initiative to ensure that we give people the best chance to be able to do their jobs, therefore, as part of the accountability and the mechanisms that we are putting in place to streamline the process of making appointments, holding people accountable, Sir, is also equally as important as allowing persons to have certainty with respect to their terms and conditions of employment. Training, Sir, is important. It means that persons within the public service equally have to recognise that they have to not think of themselves as static because the work environment has been dynamic, certainly, Sir, I started working 20 years ago and the workplace is very different today than it was when I started and I am a youngster still, but the truth is, Sir, the work environment has changed and it means that to be a professional in your area means that you have to invest in yourself, therefore, if you must see yourself first, as a profession, and to seek out the appropriate training and opportunity, Sir, to improve your

skills in order to be the best at whatever it is that your career, whatever career you have chosen and I think that once we can inspire Barbadians, Sir, to want to be the best at whatever it is that they are doing which is what the National Transformation Initiative is intended to deliver over the long term for all Barbadians whether you are in the public service or in the private sector or in the Non-Government Organisation (NGO) sector that we can truly transform Barbados simply because we have been able to transform the attitude with respect to work. I fully support our initiative to drive that transformation because it is the self-belief and self-confidence, Sir, that allows us as a country, us as a Government, us as a people to be able to go out and not just deliver for those of in Barbados but certainly to be a leader or for Barbados to continue to be a leader on the world stage with respect to, not just our status, but what we can take advantage of opportunities globally because it is a part of our psyche. Training is critical, Sir, and I urge all public servants, and I certainly urge all persons within earshot of my voice that the programmes to be executed under the national transformation initiative, Sir, is not just a training thing, it is about ensuring that persons can develop the right attitude that they can improve their skills so that whatever area it is they are working in that they can actually deliver the best possible service that can be delivered and if we can benchmark ourselves internally and I know, Sir, that Barbadians are quite demanding. If you listen to the Call-in Programmes when the day come, Sir, there is always something to complain about, but I think in hearing the complaints, it gives us an opportunity to benchmark and measure ourselves against where we were and once we are continuing to improve upon the service delivering then I know that as country we would start to get things turning again. For some this may elicit some measure of uncertainty because it marks a departure from what had obtain before but I believe that after we have seen what happen in the previous 10 years that none of us ever want to go back to a stage where Barbados is not in perpetual motion going forward, therefore, to keep that engine turning going forward it means that each and every one of us will have to give a personal commitment that we would improve upon our own work space and our own contribution and that we will put in a full day's work, and sometimes, I know, Sir, that some of us put in more than a full day's work every day, but unfortunately, Sir, some of us do not. A country cannot afford to be in a sense putting the burden on those who are already putting in a full day's work and expect them to carry the weight going forward. All of us must put in a full day's work. In putting in that full day's work it means that we are able to make decisions going forward and I say to all the public servants, whether you are affected by this Bill or not, that every day you should come to work thinking about what it is I am doing to make somebody's life a little better because certainly in this Covid-19 environment it is certainly all of our mandate to ensure that we are making decisions every day to make

somebody's life better and that has to be a part of the conversation piece with respect to everything that we do within Government and the way that we do it as well, Sir, is just as important as what is done, therefore, we have to see ourselves in a much more professional and business-like manner with respect to the execution of our task on a daily basis. Rather than seeking to say no, this cannot be done, we must be of the mindset to make a determination as to how we will work to ensure that we can get things done and get things done in a way that is much easier for the taxpayer, much easier certainly for the citizen to be able to go about their business such that it gives us within the public service, Sir, confidence that by delivering on what we say we will deliver, that the Government then becomes a critical driver for economic activity that the Government now becomes a beacon for investment in the country.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Thank you, Sir. That the Government and the public service now becomes a competitive advantage for Barbados but for that to happen it means that all of us within the context of the public service must commit ourselves 1) to ensuring that we give of our best every time, that we have committed ourselves to adapting to change because change is the only constant thing in life. For Barbados to truly move forward it means that no matter the circumstances, we must make decisions in as objective a fashion as possible. If the best person for the job has been identified through the objective measures, then we must ensure that the system works to be able to ensure that happens in the way that we would all like it to happen such that it give confidence to people that when they give of their best, their best will be recorded and at the appropriate opportunity their best will be rewarded because they have been able to perform and give of their best for their country. Belief in system is very, very, very important because we cannot afford to have thousands of people going to work when the day come, and they are disillusioned by the entire process. Competition, Sir, is always healthy. Competition is always healthy because if someone is driving you to give of your best then you will deliver on that and therefore I believe fundamentally that what we are doing is to help transform the public service and by extension the country, but everybody I believe very, very strongly must be committed to ensuring that they do what they can do in their space to ensure that not just Barbados but certainly this region of which we are part that we can rebuild certainly much stronger after COVID-19 and that Barbados and the public service of Barbados would once again become a beacon of hope for those in the country but certainly become a very strategic partner as Barbados looks to re-engage the world in the way that we are doing at the moment.

Sir, with those few words I am obliged to you. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the legislation before the Chamber introduced by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Honourable Attorney-General, and I do so in support of all of my other colleagues who have spoken before. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is of the view that the timing of this particular piece of legislation may have something to do with an upcoming election and I am sure that he better than anyone else knows about timing since he was once on this side and he took a prime opportunity when the time presented itself to do what he had to do to position himself but in this Administration our timing is for a very specific a reason. It is against a background where, as you heard the Honourable Member for St. Joseph indicate, we are cleaning up house, we are cleaning up a number of things that have gone off-track over the course of a number of years and that has become the norm because as every Minister of Government speaks I think we can go back to every ministry and relate to all of the things that we found that we have been having to make sure that we put in order.

In order to transform an economy, it is going to require change. It is going to require that a number of the institutions that once existed and a number of the ways and processes in which we do things are going to have to be dismantled and many of them are going to have to be reconstructed or as the Honourable Prime Minister will say they have to be deconstructed in order to be reconstructed. It also means that as it relates to the public service which we rely on heavily in order to drive not only our policy agenda but to make sure that in the dispensation of the policy agenda to the public of Barbados that we are able to deliver on a number of the plans that we have as a Government. It therefore means that we have to get the public service right.

Sir, I think my colleagues are tired of hearing me say that if we get the public service wrong and we do not make the transformative changes that are necessary that it does not matter how hard they work or it does not matter how many hours they spend in the Ministry of Finance we will simply be spinning top in mud. Sir, I believe it from my core. I have seen it from when I was on three statutory boards before coming to public life. I have watched officers, good officers, across various entities feel very disillusioned because they felt that in many cases they were overlooked for positions because of seniority and in some cases because of political affiliation and people who were good people, people who were qualified people, became frustrated because the very system in which they had come

into was not working for them. They had the qualification but, in many cases, they were overlooked and brushed aside for somebody else.

I have come to the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training and I must tell you that it is not much different. I have had to encounter a lot of people who have been disgruntled because they too have been overlooked and have been brushed aside like many others of my colleagues in their ministries and one of the fundamental issues for many people in the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training and other ministries is this issue of appointment whether they are persons who are acting in a temporary manner or persons who are in an established post and basically have been waiting and waiting and waiting to be able to see whether the Commission would ensure that they were able to get the necessary appointment so this Bill today is I believe timely. It is timely not just because we are about to go into a by-election and I am sure that the Honourable Senator in the Other Place who comes from the bosom of labour will no doubt herald this as one of the reasons as well why the Barbados Labour Party Administration is an attractive choice to her as well as to many people within her organisation but I do believe that it is timely because a number of the persons that this piece of legislation will impact on are ordinary Barbadians across this country who for one reason or the other have not been able to secure the necessary financing from lending institutions because they did not have a piece of paper which said that they were appointed to a particular position. It is a frustration that many may not understand if it does not affect them.

The reality is that when the Honourable Attorney-General spoke earlier he gave figures of around 1 000 or so persons that stood to be affected by this piece of legislation but in the course of the last hour or so it has come to our attention that it is far more than that. Sir, when I indicate to you how many people stand to benefit, I think the timing and the significance of this will be better understood. There are two broad categories of persons to benefit from this amendment. You have first of all the persons who are temporary or who are referred to as the temporary employees, those who do not have a permanent appointment in the public service but who will for the first time receive security of tenure. For such persons I think it is clear that this is going to allow them as I said before to have the opportunity to have that security of tenure to be able to access credit in order to purchase a house or land or anything that they wish to do. Under this category, Sir, it is expected that the total sum of 1 900 temporary employees will benefit from an appointment in the public service by the 1st of October of 2020. These persons will range from general workers to persons in administration to persons in the professional stream. That is just the temporary. Sir, I want you to understand that our Estimates prior to coming here today told us that it was going to be over 1 500 only in

respect of the temporary workers. We are talking about the total of 1 900 persons being affected.

The second category of officers to benefit from the introduction of this Bill today are those public officers who were appointed to the public service but who have been acting continuously for three years or more. These officers who although already appointed often find it demoralising to be acting for several years without being promoted and we know who they are. The fact that having to revert to their substantive position often hangs over their head is obviously another frustration that many people encounter because you do not know when the Head of a department is not going to like you and decide that they are going to make a recommendation to send you back down the line. That is what many of our officers have to encounter.

There are, Sir, a total of 1 200 officers who have been acting in various posts across the public service that will stand to benefit from being promoted to the offices in which they have been acting today or whether from the 1st of October. That is a total of 3 100 people across the public service, [it is not] 1 000, not 1 500, Sir, but 3 100 people that this simple piece of legislation, a piece of legislation that only has eight clauses, stands to affect here today. Therefore I have no problem with being accused that the timing is on the eve of an election, or that people after today the Barbados Labour Party is going to tout and to shout at the loudest extent of its voice for being able to triumph a piece of legislation such as this. I think that this basically is amazing for the people of Barbados and for our public servants to be able to know that after today they certainly do not have the uncertainty which has hung over their heads for several, several years.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I could not, however, stand here without pointing out that out of that 3 100 that there are probably... I am not going to give the precise number by category, but I know that in the Ministry of the Education, Technological and Vocational Training we have around 743 persons who stand to be affected. Sir, those persons range from workers at the School Meals Department: the servers, general workers, school meals assistants, watchmen, school meals officers, instructors at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology; it includes janitors, general workers and watchmen who would be included in the ancillary and support staff across our schools; it includes temporary teachers in nursery and primary, and also in secondary institutions across this country; and of course, it includes persons within the general administration within the Ministry of the Education, Technological and Vocational Training. Hence today is a good day for education in this country because I hope (I honestly and sincerely hope) that the frustrations which have existed prior to today in the Minister of the Education, Technological and Vocational Training can be put to rest in many ways because of the frustration that

people have felt going about their business, to try to do the people's work of this country in education. Also, I hope that people would understand the sincerity with which this Administration has been acting, because not only have we said that we are going to start to do the reforms but we have started to do them in a way that is meaningful to the very people who have to implement the policy agenda of the current Administration.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my colleague for the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown is not here but I also want to share for the benefit of this Honourable Chamber that also in the Ministry of Health and Wellness there are also about 1 000 persons who we have estimated will be impacted by this piece of legislation today. We are talking about many of the people who have been on the front line since March, in this country. We are talking about the Principal Nursing Officers at the hospitals; we are talking about our Sisters and the nurses; we are talking about our laboratory technicians, about environmental officers and their assistants, we are talking about all of the people who despite not having the paper to say that they were appointed to the position, were on the front line working hard with the Lieutenant Colonel from the City, making sure that we were not retreating or surrendering to the COVID-19 pandemic and I want to place on record this Government appreciation for those persons; we are intending to make wrong things right, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, for those people who may feel that these 3 100 people did not come in under a Barbados Labour Party Administration and therefore we should punish them, Sir, we are saying no, we are not punishing anybody, because the Barbados Labour Party Administration did not get here off the backs of Barbados Labour Party people alone and therefore we treat to people the way people treat to us. The good people of this country gave us a mandate 2½ years ago, irrespective to whether or not we were Barbados Labour Party, they gave us the mandate because they understood that we understood the changes and the transformational changes that needed to be made across this country in order to make a difference in the lives of future generations. They understood that, so among those 3 100 people are ordinary Barbadians -- Barbados Labour Party supporters, Democratic Labour Party supporters, supporters of no political party, but they are Bajans and the Barbados Labour Party has the correct words in it -- "Barbados" and "labour" and we will continue to protect both, so long as this Administration is in office.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the fact that we have started on this journey is to be commended. I know that Barbadians feel as though things are not happening fast enough sometimes but in order to make the changes that we have to make in this country, Sir, it means that you have to take some large steps, you are going to have to take some small steps, you

are going to have to run, you are going to have to walk, in order to get where you are going. We have started that process of cleaning house but I could not stand here today without saying that while I champion this legislation for coming to this place, that we have some things that we have to clean up, because the fact that it has taken this long for us, having come to office to make sure that we know how many are on the list, some people need to ask some serious questions as to why it has taken this long and why were led to believe that it was 1 000 people when it is now 3 100. It therefore means it may reflect the systems that we currently have within Government, and if it is a reflection on what we have, let us fact it and fix it. However what we cannot do is that we are talking about technology and knowing that you can basically go into your computer systems, even in your Excel documents and you can tell how many people voted in a general election; you can tell how many males and females are on the electoral list. Most of us can go in and work it out. Why is it that we cannot tell, with the simple entry of pertinent information, how many people would be affected by this legislation? Sir, we have to do better than this. I say that starting today, let this be the learning curve for the public service; let it be the learning curve for those who have the responsibility for being able to collate this information; let the message go out that it is not business as usual, that it should not take this long for us to get wrong things right in this country because they are ordinary Barbadians who are depending on us to be able to allow them to have the level of security that they need in order to live, eat and sleep in this country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to touch on another area because I have championed the legislation but I have to be fair to myself, because I think you should know by now that I am not a hypocrite, [that] I call it as I see it. Sir, we have a situation in Government where this issue of accountability needs to come into question, because while we are empowering people by this legislation, I am mindful that in many cases, that there have been a lack of negative reports on the files of officers. I do not why what it is about our society but it seems like we do not like to bell the cat, we would all go in the supermarket and talk to each other and tell each other how bad things are and why people are not doing what they are doing, and who is not coming to work, and who is not driving a stroke, and how many jobs they have on the side. However when it comes to putting pen to paper on a file, to say that officers are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, and what they are being paid to do, Sir, there are many people who do not want to put pen to the paper.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, now on the one hand, we could say that the systems previously were such that in many cases, people felt that when they wrote on the file nothing would happen or that somebody was going to victimize you, but Sir, I like to believe that to whom much is given much is expected and I believe that empowering our people today,

(these 3 100 workers) that by ensuring that we put the necessary systems in place to say to the public of Barbados: “We are trusting you to help us to drive the changes that are made”, that a number of the people in the public service would come to the realisation that we have to root out some of the bad apples. We need to root out some of the people who are not pulling their weight, because we can spend money better if we root out some of the people who need to be accountable but who are not being made accountable.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am happy that I have heard the Honourable Prime Minister repeatedly say that we are doing and making these sweeping changes across the public service, that Heads of Departments, Permanent Secretaries, and Chiefs will be held to account in making sure that the Government’s finances are not only spent properly but that the management in the affairs of department is done in a proper and efficient manner. I could not have agreed more because I see the wastage. I have seen the wastage over the years. I abhor the wastage. I believe that we have all come to this Place to change things and to make things better, to do better, and where find that there are obstacles we have to call out where the obstacles are because it is only when you call them out that people then realise, “Okay, I cannot run for cover anymore. I have a responsibility to do the right thing”, Sir. We expect that while we have empowered people that they understand that we have given much but we also expect back from them a certain degree of honesty and integrity in making sure that we protect the very system which we are seeking to create, Sir.

We have to train our people. I have often found that people get the job but then the basic things like customer care and how one interfaces with the public, many of our entities and our officers have to interface with the public but the level of training is not there to make sure that people feel comfortable using a service and being accessible to the public. Nobody wants to answer calls sometimes, Sir. Nobody wants to respond to emails. Sir, in many institutions we have to accept that it can also be a case of you having to deconstruct what exists in order to reconstruct something that works, but this thing called the Public Service sometimes can also be our worst enemy, Sir. The processes that exist sometimes prevent us from being able to make the changes which we need to make, which we know we need to make, in order to bring change and meaningful change to a society, Sir.

I am saying we have to call it out where we see it, and while we make the reforms we have to look at the fact that it cannot be that certain things have to go through ten different people in order to do something that only may have needed to go through one or two or three checks and balances. Sir, you are nodding because you know the system as well. We all know the system. I like to tell people I am no robot. I came into public life, but I came

with an education and an understanding that I was here to change things. I do not know about anybody else. Although the system is the way it is does not mean that the system must forever be the way we found it. Therefore, I always appeal to people to use the education that we have been given in this country to be able to find ways to deconstruct and reconstruct to make sure that we are able to find a better way of doing things. We are not robots. We are not, and therefore we have to come to an acceptance that we have been put here to make changes. As the legislators we know that we are here to do it from the Public Service, but we cannot become slaves to a system that is choking us simply because that is how it has always been done. It is men and women who look like us who created some of these same systems several years ago. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East is nodding too because he understands what I am talking about. We cannot be slaves to the system. We have to make sure that we break down and dismantle things that do not work, Sir, and in the process we have to not just pull from outside, but we have to look at how we can draw from experiences from other jurisdictions and also be creative enough to accept things that are home-grown as well, Sir.

I am not a believer of any copycat system. I believe that we have it within us to be able to find the reforms that are necessary for the Public Service and for Ministry by Ministry to be able to look at ways in which we can improve our efficiency or communication with the general. Also, we have to be able to work on our inter-Ministry relations as well, Sir. That is what is going to be meaningful in terms of any level of reform that is going to be necessary, Sir. It also means that when it comes to disciplinary matters -- as you will see from this legislation one of the bars to being able to have the appointment is obviously the fact that you may have been before the Commission for a disciplinary matter -- until those matters are heard, you are not going to be able to have the appointment given effect. What is interesting is that I cannot again stay here and not talk about this: These matters sometimes which are referred to the Commission are taking exceptionally long to come to closure, and what it does is that these issues are hanging over people’s heads for too long. They continue to draw, in many cases, salaries off the public purse but meanwhile the file is sitting on somebody’s desk and not being actioned in a timely manner, Sir. It has to stop.

Sir, if it is that there have been matters which have been brought to the fore, officers need to investigate the matters, send them through the appropriate channels within the time-frame designated by law, and the appropriate needs to be also taken so that people can get on with their lives, Sir. I firmly believe that that time has now come where this is not simply about appointments, but this is also about a wider discussion on how we reform a system that we have inherited from colonial which we must now revisit

in order to be able to dismantle what exists and build something that works for our people, Sir. I, therefore, want to commend the Attorney-General for highlighting as well that we may not get everything right in this legislation. The reason I say that is because oftentimes legislation gets rushed to Parliament and then you have to make amendments here and there. I believe the unions have supported, for the most part, what is in this legislation and the intention behind this legislation, but we understand that there may be anomalies. We understand that there may be situations which may arise and persons will find themselves in those situations, and we will have to address those, Sir, but it does not stop us from being able to make sure that today we allow 3 100 people to know that from October 1st they have a certain level of security of tenure within this country. It does not stop us, and it will not stop us.

Asides.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: We will correct if there are challenges that are raised, but I believe we have been able to make sure that we have got this aspect of it right which will give those people that freedom and that ideal of security that is much needed in this country, Sir. How we fix our systems is going to be critical as we move forward, Sir. We have to embark on a process of knowing who we have in our Public Service. I think a lot of times we do not know. People go out and become qualified, they go on and get the professional qualifications but a lot of the times we are not getting the right people in the right places because we are not doing the necessary human resource analysis to determine where people would be better suited, Sir.

There are people whether it is in this Chamber or whether it is in previous administrations, but everybody does not come with the same ability. We were all politicians, but some are better at doing some things than others, Sir. It is no different whether it comes to being a principle or to being a teacher or to being at any level of administrator in the system, and we have to get to a point where we accept that we know who is in the system and how we can better deploy skillsets across this country. Sir, I had the opportunity a few weeks ago to speak with teachers across this country and the issue of skills and auditing skills was raised. Many of our teachers, too, have been frustrated because in many cases they come out with their qualifications but in a lot of instances they are not in the area for which they have received their training. Therefore, an opportunity is being lost to being able to tap into the specialist areas which many of our teachers have in the system. That is something which we are in the process of revisiting, and I would wish that across the system we start to look more closely at auditing the skillsets across Ministries to make sure that as people improve their skillset, we are able to deploy them in areas which are more

relevant to what is required in particular Government departments, Sir.

I feel that we speak as a labour party for the general public, and I say so because we do not make up what we are saying. We say it because we rub shoulders with people, because we take the time to understand what the issues are, and sometimes I think that when we are trying to make all of these major changes, there is resistance because people do not generally like change, especially if change is going to mean more work or if change is going to highlight certain inadequacies or inefficiencies, Sir, but change is a good thing. COVID-19 has taught us that there are many positives in this environment which we have had to embrace; things that have been thrust upon us that we perhaps had chosen before not to embrace because we did not want to use the technology in the way which we were told we had to.

However, we have also seen that change is good, because many of the people who have been working flexible hours across the public service, and not flexible because the flexibility was given by the leaders of the organisations. Flexible because they were not working a full day's work, but instead doing other things on the side.

We have realised that it may be better in this environment to allow people to work flexy hours in the public service, so that you actually get a decent days work out of some people and allow them to do something else on the side. That is the point that it has come to. We have to accept that we have to change the models that we have held dear, because in many cases the models are not working. Yet, we have most people whether from the political class or other classes working from home, doing things online, having meetings online and we have change the way in which our public service even interfaces with itself and with the general public.

Sir, those are the types of changes that even in this environment are good changes and all they need now are to be fine-tuned to be able to make sure that we have people accountable, because there is no point in you staying at home and saying that you are working but you are not filling out the form to say what you did while you were at home. Hence, it has to be a level of accountability. That is the point that we need to get to, understanding what exist, but equally realising that we have to put systems in place now that would be different from what we would have had in previous years to make sure that we capture as many people in the public service as we can to be able drive our economy and indeed our society.

I want to endorse my colleague the Minister for St. Peter who spoke about leadership and highlighted the importance of leadership across the service. We have said that at the level of education for sure that leadership is

critical. If you do not have strong leadership children are not going to listen to you, teachers are not going to listen, and the administrators are not going to listen. It is important that in everything that you have strong leaders and leadership. I hope that as we make this significant step in empowering people, that amongst this 3 100, emerges people who are suitable for leadership positions and who are not afraid to call a spade a spade and to do the right thing in the name of the people of Barbados.

I want to again applaud the Prime Minister for taking this bold step. We have been down this road before back in 2007 and we are back here again. It shows a quality of a leader that is determined to complete a number of the things that have been started along this journey. It demonstrates a willingness to ensure that the labouring class in this country, especially our public servants are given their just due. Sir we have a responsibility to support this type of legislation, make sure that we hold people to account and that we can empower even more people.

I suspect they may be more people on the list to come, because maybe we have a number today, but they may be others that we have not captured. At this point it does not matter, because the legislation is here, and the empowerment has started. It therefore means that our people need to understand that the transformation process have started, and they are a part of that process. Therefore, they need to get on board to help us to achieve our agenda.

Sir, I am obliged. Again, I support this Bill and I will commend it to this Chamber for passing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: Sir, I rise to support the Bill before this Honourable House. I am in the very difficult position having come after some sterling examinations of the proposed legislation and the very capable analysis by section, identification, explanation of pretty much all of the issues that are capable of arising under this Bill.

Sir, I must commend the Honourable Attorney General, the Member for St. Joseph on what was perhaps the most crystal-clear presentation of a Bill in this Chamber so far. The Honourable Attorney General admitted at the beginning that it is a difficult concept. Some people are not going to grasp it. There are a lot of balls in the air and we try to settle on what is effectively the best average in the situation. He took great pains to go through who the legislation applies to, what was the mischief it was intended to correct, the classes of persons to be affected, those persons who will not be considered, the options for those who will not be initially considered to be considered retroactively, the mechanism for addressing some of the

anomalies that arise. He went through it exceedingly clearly.

During the break, a number of people who were not quite sure as to how it would apply to them, contacted me to say they now understand. Sir, I in this instance was supposed to be coming as the backup to clear up anything that might still be outstanding based on comments received afterward, but I do not think there is a person who has listened that is unclear. Actually, they are some who are very clear now and who are disappointed that it does not apply to them, but they understand exactly what was meant to be addressed here.

Sir, I just wish to echo a couple of points just to emphasise them, because some being repeated for persons who may be tuning in late that would not have heard the initial presentation. Some being repeated for those persons who may still have a niggling question and might just want it broken down into plain speak.

Sir, this Bill is not intended to be the only route for appointment of persons in public service. The fact that this legislation does not apply to you, and you are not caught under this is not the end of it. The normal mechanisms in the public service for appointments and promotions still obtain. This Bill is meant to clear up a situation that exist at this exact point in time. As we stand here now, there is a situation where persons who are entitled to be appointed by people legislation have not been so appointed. This Bill says, we are moving pass an entitlement that somebody else needs to act upon for you to get your due. We are moving pass an entitlement that is there as we say realm but not de facto, so it exists in law but does not have a factual application to the persons who it concerns.

We are saying that as of October 1st, if you are entitled to be appointed under the legislation, then you will so be appointed with nothing further having to be done. It removes all requirements of dependency on an external and third party. This effectively is the Government saying enough is enough. This football has been kicked around long enough, this is that state of play and so let it be.

Sir, this is to clear up a backlog. We who have practice in the Courts of Barbados know what problems backlog can actually cause. A backlog prevents new cases being heard. A backlog confuses the system. A backlog gives you a misconception or misperception of the facts that are obtain at any given point in time. We have a situation where they are a number of people who are entitled to be in positions. We thought it was one figure between 1 000 and 1 500 in total. We are now finding out that 1 000 and 1 500 would have been the minimum figure in one category.

I believe the figure given is now over 3 000 persons who stand to be affected and have some measure of security as of October 1st. Now, this was a number beyond the contemplation of the Government. The problem that we thought we were dealing with is a problem that was seriously underestimated by everyone concern. That points to a whole different set of issues in the public service that points to other things that need to be addressed. Sir, that points to the fact that there is chaos within the public service.

What we are attempting to do now is to remove that chaos. There are persons who are going to be disadvantaged initially by what we are trying to do. I have had very direct conversations with persons who are saying this is unfair to them or that we could not have meant to do this to them. We understand and sympathize. From the get-go, the Attorney-General started within his first two minutes of speaking to acknowledge that not that anomalies may occur but that anomalies will occur. We had examples before we even started, we knew of persons who were going to be, I do not want to say negatively affected, but were going to be disadvantaged initially by what it is we are trying to do.

In discussions, we know names and positions. Some worked with Ministers and have spoken to us directly. We know they exist, so it is not an error, or we have not overlooked people. We are not trying to deliberately disadvantage people but if you have a house of chaos or come into a completely cluttered room. Let us use this Chamber as an example. If this Chamber had every piece of furniture in this building in it, we could not function in here. You would come in and not know whether to turn left or right. You would not know where the Speaker sits, the Leader of Government Business sits, or the Leader of the Opposition sits because it would be cluttered and chaos.

It is similar to when your mind has too many things running through it at one time, so you do not know what to concentrate on and you get confused. What you have

to do then is to dress back and simplify. In this instance, the vast majority of persons who we are trying to correct the situation for are the persons who actually stand to benefit. Therefore, if there are 3 000 persons who stand to benefit, then there are probably 100 persons who stand to be negatively affected. A mechanism exists for correcting that.

We know it and made sure that it is there. We expect that in short order the persons who are disadvantaged initially are going to make their case to the relevant authority to be considered and to correct the anomaly. We do not intend to unfair anyone. There is a principle in law which is equity. Also, there is another principle of legitimate expectation. If as a result of happenstance you

stand to not be considered here, we cannot overlook your years of meritorious service and performing excellently in a position because you happened to not be in a higher position now for three years.

This is when you make your case. You will say that you would have acted somewhere else for 10 years or that you were moved over two-and-a-half years ago, so do I not stand to qualify for the previous position where I was acting? Do I not stand to qualify for the new position where I was acting? Look at my service. There is a good chance that when you make your case, you may actually not even be appointed to the lesser position. You may stand a chance to be appointed on merit, based on performance and the equity of the situation to the higher position.

Some people who now feel that there are going to be disadvantaged by this may end up actually being at an advantage. They may end up being confirmed in the higher position which they are not qualified for at the moment. Sir, it is simply a matter of clearing House. When we remove 3 000 who we are taking care of in this one out of consideration, then we have a much smaller figure that we can consider each person on a case by case basis and ensure that they get the treatment and the satisfaction that equity, legitimate expectation and just general fairness requires that they get. The persons who now may believe that they are being disadvantaged may end up severely advantaged from having the benefit of individual consideration of their particular circumstance and a decision being made that satisfies the justice of their particular case.

They need to not give up hope. Nothing that we have done as a Government is to disadvantage anyone. Our policies as a Government has been to enfranchise people and to make wrong things right. This is another instance of that. Sir, the other point that needs to be driven home is that COVID-19 has brought many things into sharp relief. We cannot continue operating in the way that we did. There are many of us who believe that things were necessary and the ways we existed before were the only ways to exist. A lot of people would go to Miami once a year to shop. They felt that they could not get by without buying 10 pairs of shoes.

I am not speaking about anyone in particular, Sir. I am definitely not now speaking about the Leader of Government of Business. However, people thought that these are things they had to do but they are realising that since COVID-19 came and the initial shutdown of the country that you do not need 20 pairs of shoes. You may need only two pairs. A lot of women do not buy lipstick now because they leave home in a mask. Eyeliner is more popular than lipstick. Sir, we have learnt now to be leaner and meaner. We have learnt now to do more with less.

We have learnt that many things are not a necessity. We have learnt to prioritize. In the same way, the ways that we do business have to change. We have to learn what makes sense in what is now the new normal. Government has had to severely prioritize. This Government is now doing more than any other Government before with less than any other Government before had to operate with. This is what is required, Sir, in these circumstances. In the same way, the Public Service cannot continue to act as a dead bloated elephant. The Public Service has to be fit for purpose. I have come out of the private sector. Like I, Sir you have always been self-employed as an attorney.

We learn that we have to make decisions that are in the best interest of our business. You do not keep on somebody who is not producing because they have always been there because your business would fail. This is how businesses run. Government has to now start to run in the same way, so longevity is but one. Loyalty is but one consideration. It is not the only consideration. This emphasis and preoccupation with seniority has warped our concepts of what is necessary for a successful business to run and a successful Government to operate. Government needs to now move to a position where we attract the best and the brightest. Government needs to now move to a position where we want the best and the brightest to come.

Government needs to now move to a position where we the best and brightest can come knowing that there is a chance for advancement based on their merit and performance. This is the only way the Government is going to be able to survive in the long-term. If we do not use this opportunity now to change that mindset and that way we operate, we are lost. This is now the perfect opportunity to draw a line in the sand and start to build Barbados back as we want it to be and as we know it has to be.

Sir, the other question asked was that if we knew there would be anomalies, why are we pushing through the legislation now? With the amount of different scenarios that are operating in the same time and space and the amount of different persons and circumstances, if we attempted to draft the perfect piece of legislation that captured and addressed every single circumstance and situation that will arise we will never get it done. If we attempted to draft a piece of legislation, Sir, that addresses the 3 000 people who are going to benefit and then in that same piece of legislation try to address every person who was acting and got promoted to a different position but has not been there for three years, or who is acting somewhere else, Sir, there are too many permutations and combinations for me to actually do justice to it but the point is, if we attempted to cover everybody now, this piece of legislation would not be here. We could not get it drafted and we could not get it passed. In this case it is necessary to draft so in this case it is necessary to draft and deal with the majority and then come back and take our time and deal

with the vast minority on an individual basis. I am glad that this piece of legislation is before us today and we are about to pass it because this directly impacts a number of departments under my ministry.

Sir, with respect to the Immigration Department. On 1st September, 2020 the Protective Services Commission approved the appointments and promotions of 53 officers in the post of Immigration Officer II and Immigration Officer III. Another 30 persons in acting positions were forwarded for consideration under this new Bill so in addition to the 53 that went before there are another 30 persons and this includes Senior Immigration Officers, Immigration Officer I, Stenographer/Typist, Clerical Officers, Assistant Accountant, Accountant, Senior Clerk, Cashier, Messenger/Driver. In the Immigration Department alone some 83 people are going to finally be able to put their lives in order and know exactly where they stand with respect to the public service in Barbados and their appointments and that is a good thing. If we look at the Barbados Fire Service, I believe there are actually more persons acting in the Barbados Fire Service than they are appointed. Almost every senior position in the Barbados Fire Service is acting and what it did, it created a block, a glass ceiling for all of the young people coming in so you have a whole slew of young persons who have joined the Barbados Fire Service, people with degrees, people who are enthusiastic who cannot go pass a point because there are no posts to be filled. This in one frees it up. When I was first appointed the Minister with responsibility for the Barbados Fire Service I went and had a meeting with them and the Chief Fire Officer said to me, the greatest issue they have is not equipment, the greatest issue they have is not even the amount of fires, the greatest issue that the Barbados Fire Service had we demoralisation in its ranks, a lack of moral because nobody could move. There was nowhere to move to. I think the Chief Fire Officer himself, Sir, has been acting for very many years. I went today to view the body of an officer who died last week and who is going to be buried tomorrow and there was a mixture. I expressed my condolences to the members of the Barbados Fire Service because it was at the Arch Hall Fire Station, but while they were mourning their colleague, they were mourning their colleague, but they felt a spark of hope at what was happening here today. This is affecting many people and it is affecting them positively. I do not believe there is going to be any major fall out in the public service over this. Actually, Sir, I think there is going to be widespread jubilation and celebration which the Honourable Leader of the Opposition as a good Christian man himself should appreciate because God loves a joyful heart. He loves his people to be happy.

Sir, I did not intent to be long and I just want to assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that there is no mischief in this. If, Sir, there is some significance to the date then the import of that was lost on

me in our deliberations. I can stand here and say that it was the closest convenient date to do it. I know of no other reason why that date was chosen. If the Honourable Member would have felt better that it be the first of January or something, then I could not side with him on that because that meant the good people stand to benefit would have had to wait that much longer. Sir, no day is too fast to do something as good as this.

Asides.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: Sir, I said the time is right. He spoke about time and I say the time is right, Sir, because now is always the perfect time to do the right thing. With respect to motive, we are doing it now because it is necessary and because it is simply the right thing to do. I hope that I have, in some small way serve to allay the fears of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who, I do not want to be troubled by this when he has other things to consider like who to run in St. George North and exactly how they plan to mount a campaign. Sir, in the midst of, I guess his pending hopelessness, I would like him to share in some of the joy and hopefulness that the rest of Barbados feels. I simply wish to say to him in one word. I can answer his concerns in one word. Why now? Honourable Member for St. Michael West, it is not because it is never the wrong time to do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to add my congratulations to the Government for taking this bold step to ensure that the public servants in this country who have been acting for so long, many of them have been working beyond human call to be able to fend for themselves and to feed their families and I think it is really very important that they Honourable Prime Minister and her team have sought to look after the needs of those persons who we know are generally ordinary folk, poor people who are relying on funds, on the salaries that they get to be able to look after their families especially in times like these were Covid-19 have taken over when many families are unemployed. Those persons who are currently working are ensuring that they look after all of their families, their children, grandchildren and other family members who may not be receiving any funds at all at this time and they are relying on mostly the State institutions to be able to survive.

I knew and I would have been a part of the team in 2007 under another Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government that sought to provide Barbadians with their appointments so that they can get security of tenure. We

know for many years there were persons who worked as general workers especially in the then Ministry of Public Works and Transport, in the schools, in the Sanitation Service Authority and so on and the worked for so many years, sometimes 30 and 40 years, but did not go home with appointments and then they did not get any gratuity and it was really very hard on them and they are the backbone of this society. They are the ones who were cleaning the schools, making sure that our children were healthy. Those school meals servers were the ones preparing and serving the meals. They were the men and women who were working in the road weeding and cleaning to make sure that our streets and other environs were clean to facilitate not only the locals but the visitors among us on whose tourism dollars we required to be able to help us to build our economy. It was a very novel moment for them to become public workers, to become appointed and we called it, at that time, a piece of paper.

I too would have been in the system for many years when I was so much young especially in the classroom where teachers at my level functioned in the school, we did exceptionally good work because we came in with good attitudes and we came in wanting to serve and we did serve. There were many other civil servants or public servants who did that too but I stayed in the Government system for a straight 11 years not being appointed applying, applying, applying for whatever positions and still not being paid attention and there were times when there was no money at the end of the month because the forms were not sent up for us because the appointments were three-month appointments. There is a special form that is sent up that if that officer is on holiday and that file is on that officer's desk and nobody fills in, then you did not get the request submitted to the Public Administration Department that your salary could come. There were also times when people had to walk there because there were not many telephones at that time. It was a very heart-wrenching experience for me as an individual filling in a space but not getting that appointment and therefore my salary was not available. Mr. Speaker, I know what the pain is like and therefore that is the reason why I would choose to give these few moments to be able to speak to this matter.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this opportunity did not just spark to do with any bi-election in St. George North. We have been discussing this at our parliamentary level for quite some weeks now because almost every day somebody said: "I have been acting in this position for four years, for three years, and Ma'am, what can happen, what can the Government do, we want security of tenure, we do not want for anything to happen and then we are sent home unceremoniously" so we know of the fear especially mothers and fathers as well because a lot of men are willing to go to look after their children and if they are not sure about the position that they hold in the job then they are becoming timid because they have seen how an

Administration before this one in that last ten years, which we call “The Lost Decade”, and it is true, because many people should have been given the opportunity after the start-up of 2008 that they could get their appointments and some went on for six and seven years later and were not given those appointments until almost close to the last general election in 2018 when a Minister chose to invite people to Erdiston Teachers’ Training College to distribute appointment letters to people in their hands as though: I give you this, so vote for me mentality, and I have a problem with that. Yes, you want people to vote for you but you have to treat people with the dignity that is expected so that they know it is not tying my vote now to the letter that I should get after seven and eight and nine years. A few of them were given their appointment letters but there were so many others who were overlooked because I believe those persons then offered the people in their constituencies so that they could get their votes but of course you know the ones that were living in the constituencies that we represented in the Barbados Labour Party did not get, so I had people in St. Thomas who worked so many years and never got a letter during that time leading up to the last election because they were living in St. Thomas so there was no real problem if you hand it in it means that Miss Forde would get the vote and a whole lot of nonsense, small islands mentalities when it comes to voting and so.

It is wrong to suppress people who have been giving of their lives to help to build this country and so I am so proud today to know that just over 3 000 Barbadians, poor black people, that we go out and boast that black lives matter and we treat black persons and other persons... I do not care which colour it is, any human being deserve the dignity of being respected and given the service across the board without any special favours or anything, so I am really very proud to be a part of this Administration because I know that tonight many teachers and janitors and general workers and so on are going to be extremely happy to know they would get security of tenure through the passing of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is really very interesting because I remember very distinctly in the 2000s when we were the Government that the National Housing Corporation in particular would have the General Workers’ Loan Fund and when those persons received their papers as they called it, their credentials, their letters of appointment, they were able to go to the National Housing Corporation and get a \$10 000 loan because they now have security of tenure and they were able to add on that waterborne facility to their house. Many of them were able to go and buy a little car that they can get to work on time or they can get their children to school or do their own personal matters, and for me that was really very profound.

Mr. Speaker, we noticed that over the last few years people were being retrenched. Many of them were being sent home before the ones when we came in and had to do it as a part of the programme that we wanted to offer to stabilise this economy. We know that there were persons at Beautify Barbados of which about 35 of them were people from St. Thomas who were working but in 2013 just after the election all 59 of them were sent home unceremoniously. Those were people who were waiting to get appointed that they could look after themselves, that they could fend for themselves, and they were really destroyed as a result of that action. There are so many others who wanted to be able to continue to work to make the difference that they can fend for their families and improve. Many of them had their dream set. Many of them who came into the system between then had their dream set and then because they were not appointed persons had been going to the bank last year, year before, three years ago, five years ago, and the bank said: You said that you saw a spot in St. Lucy in one of those areas, well sorry we can tell you, you can at least be able to borrow to do a mortgage or you can borrow some funds from the credit union to the tune of \$150 000 but sorry we cannot take that because you do not have any strength there, you may soon be retrenched and then we tie up the money and you cannot get it, so many young people are out there waiting to buy a house spot, to be able to buy a house, to be able to get a small loan to buy a car, to extend their house or to pay for their children’s education because a lot of people had to go to pay for their children’s education during that period when the Democratic Labour Party told them that they were not paying the university fees anymore, you are going to have to fend for yourself and they did not have anything to go with to the Student Revolving Loan Fund because they had no job or they were not appointed. This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is going to turn that around on its head and those persons are now going to be able to step out because they now have that security of tenure where they know they will work, they will get their salaries and they will be able then to pursue those dreams that they had all over the years.

I have a caution though, Mr. Speaker, because I am deeply saddened at what I see and hear almost every day. I would say that at least 95 per cent of the public servants do a good job, I must say that. It has nothing to do I believe with who you are when you call, meaning if it is a Minister in Government, if there is this conglomerate or whoever but I think generally our people need proper training. Mr. Speaker, I have a problem when a lot of people apply for a job, they are given the interviews and then because of who you are with a lot of nepotism in this country as well, I hate it... I hate it because it is destroying the pillars of what we knew would have been the civil service or the public service where people always gave high standards of delivery even when some of them did not have two certificates and meet the qualifications. Some jobs called

for four certificates but some people were in there with two and they were struggling and they were studying but at least they knew about human resource management and how to treat to clients. I always came along and learned from working at F. W. Woolworth when I was 15-plus because it was a summer job that the customer is always right but sometimes when you pick up the phone and you call into offices, it is not only the public service now but in some private sector institutions, you hear hello as though it is somebody's private phone in their house. For me that is disrespectful and it calls for good training.

I know that as a young person coming into the governmental institutions that we were given training. If it were not by the Ministry of Education itself, it was with the senior teachers and others within the classroom or within the school who would teach us what are the things to be done, how you treat to parents and how you treat to business people and so on and that is not coming through at all so some days you call you are treated so unkindly and people snapped back at you, and it is only a 5 per cent or so that are doing it, but when you listen to the call-in programmes and you would hear how people get responses from some governmental department with those individuals who really required the training. Mr. Speaker, I am saying I do not care how many certificates or how many degrees people have there has to be that human component where a person says I did not get my pension on time, I went at the post office, I called at the National Insurance Office [only to be told] when they called they told me to go back and wait, that it has to be in the mail; what do you expect? We are dealing with thousands of people now, we cannot talk with you now, we cannot tell you that, to call back tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is wrong. You asked the postman who said they really do not know, that if they had it that person would have gotten it. even the postman at that level more often than not knows how to treat or entreat the people but we are not getting our persons who have these "big" degrees and such to work with some folks as a result of the queries and concerns that they have even though those persons may not be able to deliver themselves well, and might become agitated because they have grievances. How would any of us feel if we did not get the pension cheque on time? How would you feel if your salary did not come on time, when you know you have your utility bills to pay, or that you have to look your grandmother or grandfather, that you have to spend the money? When you asked a question you may become agitated too but that is wrong as well, but we have as human beings to entreat to one another in the way. I believe that at the entry of the civil service now that all persons should be given some kind of formal training so that they would understand their role and that the customer (meaning the client who calls in) is always right and that that person would "bite back their words" and would treat people with dignity and respect that they require. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would also want to see that happening at the entry point.

I also want for us to make sure that the people who we hire -- not the politicians, we do not interview anybody for any job or anything -- but that we do not only look at their qualifications but that we look at their suitability. There are some people would be lend the best interview ever in the world but when they got on the job some of them would become so haughty that you cannot even ask them a question, and that is permeating the entire society. Sometimes you go into stores in Bridgetown or wherever and you are waiting and people looking at you, because they seems to think that you look "ordinary" would ask: "You want sum 'in there?" But when somebody else in a jacket or tie comes in, let me use myself perhaps, they would ask: "O Ma'am, you look well, may I help you?" but when the little old lady who probably has thousands of dollars more than me because I am always "broke" you do not say to her: "Ma'am, how may I help you?" but you look back and asked: "You did want sum'tin there?" but then you had the good "proper" English because you were talking to me. I do not tolerate that. I think that we must be across the board with the discipline and so I want to say Mr. Speaker, Sir, how happy I am that this will take place and that we as a Government continues to follow and train our public servants how to get along with people, how to treat people well, how to be punctual on the job, how to be regular because often people would take a day off. Nowadays it is for their own birthday, then [they would take a day off for the] husband or partner or whomever; then it is their mother's anniversary; and now we have funerals all day, both mornings and evenings, so that people just would take a day off. Some would have just returned from holiday and would say it is time that they go on holiday again, and who is monitoring them? Therefore, I want to say I want a proper appraisal system. When I was in the classroom, (I cannot speak for teacher now) we had a strong Barbados Union of Teachers that did training for young teachers, to them know what was their responsibility, that they were here to teach, to guide, to protect, to direct. But now some of the unions and other institution associated with workers are not doing that and people are not following rules. And it would be useful if the Honourable Member in the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment, along with others, would let people know that when they are consistently absent, that when it is time for them to receive their gratuity, according to my simple understanding, that that is taken out for all of those days absent. There are some people who are not at all sick, yet they are home 24/7, on extended sick leave (on extended sick leave). I want for the Honourable Prime Minister and her team to get the Medical Board to board those persons who are at home, [some of whom] nothing is wrong with them. Mr. Speaker, Sir, sometimes you get to know that they are just at home because they feel like staying, because of the fact that they are still going to be paid, anyhow.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, those are some of the things that we need to look at because at the end of the day, the drain is on the economy. and when you are paying someone who stays at home for six months, with nothing being wrong with them, that they just feel like, [it also means that] somebody has to fill in for them so you are not paying that person in the substantive post, because of the fact that they are appointed, and you are also paying the temporary person who is filling in for that individuals who is out, so you are paying out money twice and we are feeling it in the economy. we are feeling it in the institutions, [may be] that is why some of our schools cannot get maintained in the way we would like because the moneys are going elsewhere and I think it is about time that these persons who are going to be appointed be told that this is not a slave thing that is being pushed at them, but that it is just they are building up the public service and making it the institution that was envied across the world, for how Barbadians have a culture of going to work and offering quality service and making sure that they do what they have to do with an element of professionalism. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would want to appraisal systems to be put in place so that when you do not come to work that that would be recorded somewhere; when you do not deliver on time, that that is recorded somewhere, and the different negative things that are coming through, that 5 per cent of the entire service while the other 95 per cent I believe is going well. Now with the technology we are quicker responses and better delivery that makes the difference and so Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would want the suitability, the accountability, the respect, the guidance to customer service is top-of-the-line, do not care whichever department, whether private or public that you are in, to be able to make people happy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, finally, I am proud today because I want to indicate very clearly that I know that many of my constituents (and I have to speak for them because I am of the two people in this country who in the last election was able to have scored the highest votes ever in any election in the history of voting) and I know that many of my constituents who have been there, who have been calling and saying that they would like to have a chance to do something with their homes, wanting to buy a car, wanting to invest or buy Bonds but they cannot because of their temporary status. I am sure that they are going to rest assured tonight. I want to conclude by saying that this Barbados Labour Party from its inception in 1938, has always been there for the workers???? You cannot legislate good behaviour, and so we know that those frontline workers are the ones who will meet most of the humps and grumps and insults and criticisms, but I believe and I pray that they will continue to walk with dignity, work beyond human call as I know they do, and that some kind of special package will be given to them to make the difference and I am sure that once the economy begins to grow and being to improve in the areas in which we are

working to get the funds coming in, those frontline people will be able to get a better deal so that they too can live a different or better quality life for safety, looking after their families, building their homes and getting whatever benefits they require to be able to go to the next level. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I conclude by thanking you sincerely for giving me the few moments, and I pray that those 3 000-odd persons would be able to continue to give those good attitudes and good service to the people of Barbados and to the visitors who will come among us. You are talking about immigration so visitors are going to go there to have their matters regularised. Wherever it is across Barbados I pray that people, especially the public workers at this time, will offer their services and make sure that they conform to the high standard that we know we have had, because at the end of the day it is about people. People matter, and when they do the good, the God of Heaven will continue to give them strength and the opportunity to be able to do even better.

Sir, I wish to thank you for this moment and I wish that other Members who are here not only will express their thankfulness to the Government and so on, but as we go around Barbados we will let people know it is because this Barbados Labour Party has always cared and will continue to care because human development is critical and when people have funds, they can spend, they can share and they can deliver the services and bring back our Public Service to that high level where we know it has been before so that at the end of the day all Barbadians would be proud of the services which they receive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. N.G.H. ROWE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise to lend my support to this debate and to endorse the Public Service Bill that is being discussed here this evening. Sir, back in 2006 I was employed under the Administration of the late Professor the Right Honourable Owen Seymour Arthur and back then I was assigned to a department under the Ministry of Social Care, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was the Minister presiding over that Ministry 14 years ago. The Government had changed in January 2008, Sir, and by the Year 2009 I was a victim of political attacks. Mr. Speaker, Sir, please note that the former Minister of Finance was the Minister presiding over the Ministry back then in 2009. I remember back then I received a call from a manager at the time telling me that the Acting Director at the time wanted to meet with me and wanted me to attend a meeting at headquarters. Innocently, Mr. Speaker, I went to this meeting without a representative from the union although I was a member of the National Union of Public Workers at that point in time, knowing that the Dems were on a

rampage and were out destroying the lives of people who they felt were affiliated with the Barbados Labour Party at that point in time, Mr. Speaker.

I attended this meeting and in this meeting I was told by the Acting Director that at the end of September 2009, I would no longer be employed by the department under the Ministry of Social Care. Mr. Speaker, I asked why not and the Acting Director said to me that the Black Rock Lazaretto was closing down and she had to find room the place the employees. Sir, my next question was what did that have to do with my job description. Anyhow, the Acting Director looked at me and she said to me that she had her job to do and she was only following instructions. Mr. Speaker, Sir, would you believe that the former Minister of Finance who was presiding over the Ministry at that point in time had the Acting Director doing all of his dirty work? The Acting Director was victimising those who were employed under the Barbados Labour Party before the Government changed.

Sir, I recall when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East was speaking that she spoke about politics of inclusion. I can honestly say, Sir, that the Democratic Labour Party does not know the true meaning of politics of inclusion. All the Dems know is about them and only them and nothing else but them. It is so funny that even at the last Annual Conference which the Democratic Labour Party had a reliable source who attended sent me a picture of a ballot and the only names that were on this ballot were the President of the Democratic Labour Party and her disciples. I said that to say, Sir, that the Dems only know about "teifing" and nothing else but "teifing". Mr. Speaker, Sir, can you imagine that after all of the wickedness that took place when I was employed back then, I was a constituent of the former Minister of Finance? Yes, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Would you believe that my supposed-to-be representative at the time, because I was affiliated with the Barbados Labour Party and he heard that I was a friend of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, took it upon himself to try to victimise me as much as possible but despite all of the drama that took place, the former Minister of Finance had instructed the Acting Director at the time when he was the then Minister of Social Care.... I guess this was a move, to avoid the embarrassment being the Member of Parliament for the area and me being a constituent of his, to relocate me from the department in which I had been working to a different department but under the same Ministry.

Sir, would you believe that after fighting for my job the Dems decided to move me from one post and place me in a different post. By doing that my salary scale had changed.

Sir, I remember back then, if I was working for, let us say \$2 000 a month, my salary scale had change and

increase to like \$3 000 a month. One of the wicked things that I had to endure under the Democratic Labour Party, which I said earlier was political victimisation, was the fact that they had placed me in a different post, earning more money, but made sure that my salary remained the same when I was in the original post before they had move me. These are the type of wicked things that the Democratic Labour Party would put some public servants through.

Mr. Speaker that is not all. I remember after working for nearly 12 years in the post, people came into Government after me and received their appointment letters. I was in there for nearly 12 years under the Democratic Labour Party and never ever received my appointment letter. People that came in after me, worked for four, five or six years the most, came and received their appointment letters under the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, this is the type of discrimination and political victimisation that some public servants up to this day still have to go through. Sir, I am very glad that this Government have taken it upon themselves to make wrong things right when to comes to appointments within the public service.

Sir, I am very happy to be able to stand and support this Bill that will benefit employees in the public service who are presently facing some of the same challenges that I had to endure under the DEMS back in 2009 until 2018. Double check?? I am happy to know that persons who I have left behind and probably still enduring the same challenges that I had to endure. Sir, even some of my constituents who I know that work within the same Ministry and up to this day have not been appointed.

Sir I am very happy to see that this Government after coming to office for two years and more, have taken it upon themselves to make wrong things right where appointments are concerned in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say it means a lot to me to see persons who have been working for so many years, have not receive their appointments. Sir, sometimes it is so challenging when a person take a job letter to the bank that have on temporary, cannot get a mortgage or a loan just because of political victimisation under the DEMS.

Mr. Speaker I fully support this Bill and I hope that this Government will continue on the trajectory that will continue to look out for poor people and people that may not have a voice within the public service. I hope that those persons who are in the public service will not take this opportunity after receiving their appointments to become nonproductive, but continue to be more productive and continue to give efficient and effective service within the public service. With those few words I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker Sir. I am honoured to stand here today in the closing of this Bill that is before us to deal with unfinished business. I have come this evening to talk about unfinished business, because that really has been the story of this Government. It seems as though the path to cleaning up is never ending. For those listening on, they may say, again, but for those who are in the trenches like us, I say, again, because it is ironic that we stand here today in this Parliament that is sitting at Worthing, Christ Church, not in town.

However, it was on this very road and in this very district that the most visible aspect of having to clean up was reflect Mr. Speaker on the eve of the last election. Of course, every one of us know that I refer to the untenable and unfortunate situation with respect to the sewage running in our streets that led to a number of international advisories against our country.

We had a similar situation with respect to cleaning up the affairs of Government fiscally. We came to Government and significant sums of money were owed by the Government of Barbados to divers and players locally and internationally. The amount of almost \$1.9 billion was owed out at the time to different agencies, some state owned, majority of the private ones local but some overseas. We have reduced that to literally just on or about \$300 million, which we are working down.

We had unfinished business to deal with the tax refunds. Mr. Speaker, many may forget since they are now getting back their refunds. As recent as yesterday the Government of Barbados paid out another \$15 million in refunds to keep current. However we state on the books just under \$300 million in arrears from refunds that were due and earned from 2010 to 2016. Sir, you may recall from as early as 2018 we started to pay back to go current by the October, November of 2018 we started to deal with people for the first time in almost eight years with respect to their current refunds.

Mr. Speaker, have we reached perfection? No. However, are we significantly better off than we were two years ago? Absolutely, Sir. For those who want to challenge us, then just pick up the Mission Critical Agenda and look at it. Look and see, Mr. Speaker, how much unfinished business we have been dealing with because it seemed as though the decade of 2008 to 2018 was truly the lost decade. Mr. Speaker, I come here today as Minister responsible for the Public Service with a certain degree of pride. I thank the Honourable Attorney General for leading the Bill this morning. I had to speak at the United Nations (UN) Summit on Financing for Development which continues to be absolutely pivotal to our interests because

we need to be able to mobilize funds for development purposes after COVID-19 in the midst of climate crisis for the region and Barbados. We all know the consequences of zero revenue for tourism for months now and the consequences for tens of thousands of persons becoming unemployed, as a result of COVID-19. I thank the Honourable Member for St. Joseph for doing an excellent job in leading this Bill before this Honourable Chamber. I want to thank all of the Honourable Members who spoke, including the Leader of the Opposition.

I am told that the Leader of the Opposition is supportive of this Bill and I thank him for that. I am told that he perplexed as to the date.

Asides.

Hon. Miss. M. A. MOTTLEY: My concern, Sir, is that on my way to the Honourable Chamber I heard him in a loud Aside when the Honourable Member for Christ Church East was speaking about things that seem to be consuming his mind with elections but I would simply say to him that when he spoke he mentioned money. I was not sure what money had to do with his position or the Member for Christ Church East, other than to say that seems to be on his mind. What is on my mind is the appointment of 3 100 people that were left unresolved.

What is on mind is that the approximate number, and the Director General is here, is 1 900 temporary persons who are in established posts and less than 1 200 who are temporary in temporary posts. I want to go to this point. The Honourable Member asked why now and I say to him that I did not know by sitting opposite me, he has assumed all of the characteristics of the last man who sat opposite me; the former Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. I did not know that by simply sitting opposite me that he would now assume that everything is to be put on pause or delay.

I did not know that by simply sitting opposite me that he would fail to recall those persons who stand to benefit from these measures are those who need it all the more now because of COVID-19. Some of these persons who will benefit whether they be firemen, clerical officers, teachers or nurses, et cetera, many of them are in serious need of additional support beyond that which their salary can give them. The point that has been made by Member after Member in here is that the security of tenure is absolutely critical in order for any of them to establish a meaningful relationship with a financial institution in this country. Mr. Speaker, we all know that during 2020 there are very few people who have been able to go by without digging into their savings.

Many of us have had to do it and we have seen our constituents do it because even if they are not without jobs

and are working, they have a mother, father, brother, sister, nephew, niece or grandchildren who have been disrupted by what has come to be regarded globally as the greatest disruptor of economic activity easily since World War II and possibly before the Great Depression. Mr. Speaker, what is it? I am not going to reflect on the fact that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West either is ignorant of the realities of fiscal management in the affairs of this country or chooses to ignore or forget what is the reality of the ordering of our affairs.

I may have been born on October 1st but it was not me who made October 1st the beginning of the second-half of the fiscal year of Barbados. It really was not me. October 1st represents the beginning of the last six months of the budget of this country. If you are going to have a tidy mind to do tidy things in a structured way, then that is when you anchor yourself to things that are easily capable of being sectioned out and put into a bloc to allow us, in particular the Member for Christ Church East Central and the officers of the Ministry of Finance, to appropriately order their affairs.

Similarly, we recognise that before we come on to the end of the year there may be people who may need to do some little borrowing or settlement in their affairs. If we held on much longer it would be a drag. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, this Government has made it clear that we cannot do everything but the things we can do we shall do in the interests of boosting economic activity in this country, so that more jobs can be created and more people can work. Mr. Speaker, let us be realistic. If you have a fire officer who is a senior fire officer and has not been appointed or an Immigration officer as I know many of them who are not appointed and have work at their homes to do but the work will cost about \$30 000 which is not a kill cow but equally not five cents and cannot be financed out of their savings or salary, then why not appoint these persons to allow them to put themselves in a position to undertake the work that is necessary?

The rainy season is in. We know what it was last night to see a number of districts flooded. I want to thank those officers and Members of Parliament who came out to ensure that we could go and deal with the persons who have been affected, although I will say to the House that it is rewarding the run-off of water has been significantly improved in this country, as a result of the cleaning. I thank the Member for St. Michael West Central and the previous Minister, the Member for Christ Church West for working assiduously with the Government for us to get there.

Have we finished the work at Murphy's Pasture and Emmerton yet? No, we have not but I have every confidence that will happen. I thank the Member for St. Lucy. Perhaps, I should have remembered him up front because they tell most of the steel benders went to St. Lucy

went to finish a bridge there and, hence, were moved from Chapman Lane. I did not know he was still such powerful man after leaving the Ministry but I salute him. Good, good, good. The point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to use both fiscal and non-fiscal measures to trigger economic activity in this country. This measure provides the security necessary for a lot of public servants to be able to make decisions. Some make want, as I said, to repair houses, some may have medical bills to sort out, some may have a child away at university, some may have just simply a desire to do something for themselves that they have been planning for, for years as many of us know that people are entitled to do but then there is that other class, Mr. Speaker, who need also to acquire houses for the first time and we have already, as a Government, recognise that we have a class of persons earning under \$4 000 per month, in some instances, under \$3 000 a month -- I have given the story of a police constable or a single nurse, or a single teacher at the very bottom now coming in and they like me might feel that rent is dead money. I have said all my life rent is dead money. From the time the rent leaves your pocket and you go, before you even give it to the next person the money is dead. You take that same money and you put it in a mortgage and immediately piece of it starts coming back to you like a boomerang so that what you get back in it is equity and a capacity to be able to leverage that asset at some point in the future again. Rent is dead money and that is why this Government has been consistent in its view about the need for economic enfranchisement in this country. Whether you believe and support economic enfranchisement, one of the most important things is security of tenure and what is significant to me is that in the brief provided by the Ministry of the Public Service to me a lot of these people who are in these posts who stand to be appointed have been waiting in some instances since 2005. Do you understand what I just said, Mr. Speaker? That for 15 years some of these 3 100 people have had to wait and put their lives on pause. The last Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government - in fairness, the Honourable Attorney General might have spoken to it - in the Public Service Act of 2007 there was a provision for person who had three years or more in a temporary post, in an established post or in a combination of the two to be appointed. I ask myself, therefore, how do we, 15 years later end up with 3 000 out over 15 000 leaving out the State-owned enterprises, there are about 15 000 people in the public service. That is one fifth, that is 20 per cent, that is one in every five people in the public service of Barbados who stands to be appointed today as a result of the passage of this Bill should it pass this House, the Honourable Senate and receive the assent of Her Excellency. Mr. Speaker, do you know what one out of five is? One in five for any established employer to have them on a shoe string is not a good thing. Now I equally say that this Government therefore believe - and we started from as far back as 2018 to ask the Ministry of the Public Service to start the process of appointments. There were legitimate conversations that we have had with the

representatives of the workers, the union movement, the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW), the Barbados Workers' Union, even Unity Trade Union with respect to the Customs Officers and the bottom line is that in spite of us agreeing with them, the length of time, Mr. Speaker, that it was taking to do the appointments would keep us in a constant game of catch up and remaining almost on a treadmill, not being able to be fair to those who are now coming in and who expect that they too will have a normal career path including appointments. Mr. Speaker, others have made it absolutely clear in this Honourable Chamber today that this Bill is not the only means by which public servants will be appointed but what this Bill does is to take a blockage of significant proportions, almost 20 per cent of the mainstream public service and to allow us to deal with them in good faith. When you have a temporary officer in a temporary post or a temporary officer in an established post, you have to wait for permission to pay, you have to wait for people to send up the application to get the approvals when the authorisations go down. I spend too much of my time just simply saying I approve, I approve, I approve, and I have come to the conclusion that if we do not bring the public service of Barbados into the 21st century full, fast and quick. We cannot go where we need to go as a people and as a nation and that is why we have put on the table with the social partnership and we will continue to review and conclude now, new arrangements for flexitime and new arrangements for medical boarding. Medical boarding must be one of the most frustrating exercises in this country both for the person applying to be boarded and for the persons who are depending on results to know whether to turn left, right, go straight or go back. You cannot get a result, in some instance, two and three years? It does not even take that long to go any part of the world and you cannot get somebody medically boarded in short order. Take a copy of the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition knows it well because he signed it, and on page 42 of that Manifesto the commitment to deconstructing and reconstructing, what is the public policy we are trying to achieve? Well, we want stability and fairness in the public service of Barbados for each and every employee who is employed in the public service of Barbados. What is the public mischief that we need to make sure that in doing what we are doing we are not unfair people and that is why we went back at it and looked at the combination of temporary and established and put in that, but more importantly that we also put in this Bill today, Mr. Speaker, a specific provision which finds itself also in the main public service act at Clause 7(2) that where an officer to whom Section IV or V refers is prejudice by the operations of either section in respect of an appoint to an officer by virtue of the provisions of either section, the Governor-General may appoint the officer to an office, the appointment of which results in remedying the prejudice. This exist in the current Bill and it was the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) who introduced that provision in the

current Bill as well so that I would believe that all of us agree that fall-back mechanism that says to the world, we do not know every single case because we genuinely do not and the reality is that the compilation of records and the compilation of actions is not always perfect in an organisation as amorphous as the public service of Barbados. The rules are very often difficult. Indeed I say that the only organisation whose rules are more byzantine than the public service of Barbados is the University of the West Indies (UWI) documents that establish the university and govern the Senate and other organisations within the university and its financing by the way too, but the bottom line is that the public mischief is being met by this provision that says that we do not know but I also want to invite those members of the public service who believe that this may do injury to them to write the Personnel Administration Department and to allow us to have a special file created so that we could go through them one by one by one by one because if the intention in the public policy being proposed is to bring fairness and to create opportunities for persons who are working in the public service so that they are empowered and incentivised to give of their best then it cannot be the intention of the Government to see anomalies and to leave the anomalies on the side of the road without reference or without consideration or without resolution of the same. Mr. Speaker, we are very, very clear on that.

You heard me speak, Sir, about the other things that we must do to modernise. The PAD, Personnel Administration Department, has sent me the list of the numbers all on disciplinary charges. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East speak very clearly this afternoon as well as others outside of this Chamber and like medical boarding it cannot be that a disciplinary charge is an open-ended act never to be completed and to leave people in abeyance. Justice delayed is justice denied however which way you look at it and to that extent, Mr. Speaker, this Government will put in place arrangements to specifically allow us to be able to follow through on those disciplinary charges. Why? Because I make an allegation does not mean that somebody is guilty. It merits investigation and after investigation there is the rule of natural justice which requires that I do not be a judge in my own cause but more importantly that I be given an opportunity to be heard with respect to any allegation that is made against me.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, there is something called the Administrative Justice Act that literally binds the Crown with the exception of certain departments. The Administrative Justice Act, Mr. Speaker, as you well know being a practitioner yourself...

Mr. SPEAKER: 309B.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Cap. 309B. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East looked at me and you, I am not sure, Cap. 309B. The Administration Justice Act deals with reparations within the context of the administration of the Government of Barbados so that people ought not to act arbitrarily, people ought not to act without giving reasons or people ought not to act in a way that reflects bias, conscious or unconscious. Mr. Speaker, the Administrative Justice Act is there. The late Sir Roy Marshall who is no longer with us and who was my Special Advisor as Attorney-General indicated to me when I was Attorney-General, and I must tell you I accepted much of what he said, that the Administrative Justice Act has done some damage to the quality of decision-making in the public service because people are frightened that their actions and their decisions are reviewable especially in certain departments and that whether it is a school or whether it is mainstream department that we may have to look at capping the damages that may flow from improper or wrong decisions that may not be out of malice but may be born out of an experience, may be born out of not having sufficient tracks or may be born out of a whole range of reasons and that we may want to look and see how best we can treat to these issues without causing damage to the citizens of this nation.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados is unique in having codified this form of behaviour that is acceptable in public spaces. There are a number of countries that do not have the legislation and there are some common law jurisdictions that go on the basis of common law. The bottom-line is that judicial review has become a feature of our Administration but in some instances I am not sure that we have trained people sufficiently well in the precepts of the legislation in order to allow them to improve the quality of their decision-making so we need to do that.

We have committed to a massive retraining of both the public and private sectors. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because nobody owes us a living and nobody is going to do for us simply because we say do for us. We can only demand respect by earning respect and that means that we have to do the best job that we can do in every space wherever we are in the employ of the public space on behalf of the taxpayers and citizens of this country. I believe, Sir, that that training should not be only in the area of your specific discipline as I have said over and over but also should be in the rudiments of what it is to be a good citizen, to be a star Bajan to be able to recognise that we have a commitment to try to obtain excellence in all that we do recognising that we have a commitment or that we need to have integrity and reflect honesty and transparency and accountability in all that we do. How we treat each other is important. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

We tried to be able to create a new mission statement that I hope the Ministry of Public Service will make known

to all as easy as people know A, B, C and 1, 2, 3 because if we all understand what is the role that we each play in holding up this thing called a public service, then I am satisfied that we will all be able to make many hands make light work and to allow us to move at a quicker space. Why do I want that? I want that because at the end of the day we want a public sphere that pays well, that treats people properly and that creates opportunities for persons both in terms of training and education but also in terms of enterprise development.

Mr. Speaker, only yesterday I met with some persons discussing the whole nature of a new concept with respect to how we treat to public enterprises and the notion of something called public sector neutrals which allowed you to be able to identify the benefit even in non-profitmaking entities that have only a social output: How do you empower the citizens, how do we provide for the entrepreneurial leadership that is necessary in every agency because entrepreneurial means taking risk, it does not only mean about money; how do we ensure that our workforce is empowered and liberated; how do we, Mr. Speaker, ensure that every agency in Government whether profitmaking or otherwise has a commercial discipline to it and how do we have an ethos that is unique to the Barbados public service that allows us to know you see them people who are coming down who are our client class, do not turn them back or do not tell them come back in an hour especially if you do not know how the little lady is going to be able to get money to go back home whether she is catching a bus or whether she is taking a taxi or whatever it is. I say to people even when I give my own example that it takes me two minutes to talk to anybody. Listen and see what they want and if you cannot deal with it at that particular time, Mr. Speaker, you ask them to come when you know you can deal with it, and if you can because it is a simple issue all the better and if you need to refer them to somebody or to some agency you do it but what we have to do is that that must be the ethos of everyone in the system from bottom to top from middle to middle, middle, to middle, middle, middle, everyone, and I am asking that each public servant in this country recognise that it is down to each and every one of us and this Government wants you to know that we are trying to be fair to you first. It is unfair for over 3 000 persons to be working with this kind of loosed arrangement that provides no security of tenure.

We recognise that there are difficulties but the difficulties are not insuperable so that where we do not have enough posts, that is why you have the concept of supernumerary posts, so that immediately a supernumerary can be created to accommodate the fact that that particular post may be occupied, but that the persons is on secondment outside of the public service for a considerable period of time, and therefore nobody can be appointed to come up, and once you stop and clog the top, you reflectively clog everything coming down because the

person who is acting would be substantively holding a post so somebody cannot be appointed in their post because they cannot be appointed in the top post, and it goes right down the chain. And that is what happened in Customs Department, that is what happened in a whole host of things but the Customs Department is perhaps the most egregious example because you had a Controller of Customs acting as a Permanent Secretary for over 10 years. Mr. Speaker, Sir, so what does that mean? It therefore means that you could not have appointed a controller. The last Government chose not to appoint a Controller of Customs. Now, could they have done what we are now doing? Of course, they could have, and that is why I say to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, I thank the Honourable Member for supporting the Bill but I wonder whether the Honourable Member is not taking on too many feature of the man who previously sat opposite me, because he would well-appreciate why this cannot be kicked down the road or deferred because this is a matter that is past urgent.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Well, I am glad to hear that, so that we move forward with haste. It was not done sooner because we asked for them to be done, literally, by the manner in which it would normally be done and we were able to complete appointments in the Immigration Department. We were able to complete the 132 posts with the Custom Officers and clerical team but the reality is that in the absence of statutory authority it becomes a tedious task and what we are now doing is saying, look, there is a blockage. Anybody ever heard about colon cancer? There is blockage in the colon. There may have a blockage in your stomach; you may have a blockage somewhere in your body. You take it out and then you allow the body, hopefully, to recover and to rehabilitate itself. And Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have left out, deliberately, police and prisons, because we believe that those still have to be the subject of a painstaking deliberate individual appointment but we are now in a position to do that in quick dispatch, having removed 3000 others that the officers would otherwise have to do and we held police and prisons because they more than any other agency require commitment to a hierarchal disciplinary organisation that in truth and fact, part of the difficulty that we face in the Royal Barbados Police Force today comes from the fact that there was a failure on the previous Service Commission to recognise the importance of the fact that the Commissioner of Police must have command of his officers. And that the Commissioner of Police has the right to determine, after exams and reports and other things, how promotions should obtain within the Force. now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the last Service Commission (and I have said this publicly already) not only rejected the recommendation of one Commissioner of Police in the form of Mr. Darwin Dottin and took instead the recommendations of the Deputy

Commissioner of Police over the Commissioner, but then you had the current Commissioner of Police in 2018 sending recommendations to the then Services Commission only to have them rejected and the Chair of the Services Commission, a former junior public officer, (a former junior public officer) chairing a Commission with a former retired senior police officer, (both police officers) but neither of them currently serving, and making judgments that rejected the current Commissioner of Police in the recommendations that he would have made to the Service Commission. Well, I do not know on what basis they would have had access to reports and records of the existing police who were being recommended. They might have had access to a past book for "George Skeete", they might have had access to other documents but I know that they could not have made the kind of judgments that they were making to counter the person who at law supervises that Force day, to day, to day -- every day. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I make these points because we need to be careful in understanding that we are trying our best to create an environment within which people who work for the public service of Barbados can feel proud that they belong to a fair and transparent environment that gives them opportunities and that creates a platform for them to learn and to be able to move from strength to strength and to be able to grown and look at things differently.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, and we have to do some things differently, we are in discussion with the Department of Corporate Affairs because we recognised that we need to take a different approach in order to allow that department to restructure itself, and to be able to work in a seamless way, giving them the opportunity to do it, along with support that we provide for them, technologically and policy wise, to be able to make sure that they can deliver service of a quality to the people of Barbados and to the investors in this country that will be of a superior nature.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are looking to be working with the Ministry of the People Empowerment and Elder Affairs to see how best we could change up how social services are delivered in this country. because at the moment we have a situation where you may argue that each department does not have sufficient social workers : the Child Care Board, the National Assistance Board, the Disability Unit, the Welfare Department, et cetera, but when you take all of them together, Mr. Speaker, Sir, as a former social worker yourself, you would know that we have almost 400 people working as social service workers who if each was treated as a first-responder, would give us sufficient width and breadth to reach the entire range of problems from St. Lucy to St. Philip, from St. James to St. John in this country and Mr. Speaker, Sir, therefore the Government is consumed, not only with the terms and conditions of employment but also with the substantive purpose for which persons may find themselves required to work on the behalf of the people of this nation.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is one other topic which I would want to touch on briefly, before sitting that is the structure of our service at the very top. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I make no bone about it, rather, that I have raised it with the officers and I raise it again. We have to ask ourselves whether the structure of the Barbados public service is meeting the needs of the serving the country and our ability to do business in this country, and to meet the needs of the citizens of this nation in the third decade of the 21st century. I believe that the time has come for me to appoint a small group, [consisting of both] local and regional, to help us to determine how best we could restructure aspects of the public service in order to better deliver what we need. We cannot keep talking about it and then nothing happens. And let me give you an example: in the way in which we have certain ministries structured we have the Permanent Secretary who is the Administrative and Financial Head of the ministry; we then have Chief Technical Officer. More often than not the Chief Technical Officer is at S2 scale or S3 and the Permanent Secretary is at S1 or S2 scale. So the first problem, that you have is that the person who is the Chief Technical Officer will always want to go into the Permanent Secretary position because the pay and the level is better. But when you have now that level of movement and that level of disruption, from ministry to ministry, to ministry. It the same with a Chief Technical Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, in the Solicitor General's Department, the Chief Parliamentary Counsel's Department, in Education, and you go on and on. They are not there because we just want to be fanciful. They are there because Government, more than any other institution in this country, is faced with complex, technical issues and if we are to regulate, then the chief regulator inevitably is the Chief Technical Officer. We see it clearly with COVID and the Chief Medical Officer. I have maintained that the Chief Medical Officer has powers in this country that not even a Prime Minister or a Governor General has, and there are other powers which other Chief Technical Officers have. For example, there is the Chief Labour Officer.

We have to ask ourselves whether we can continue with this situation where we are shifting people on a day's notice and two days' notice and a project that is sitting down on a Chief Technical Officer's desk is then put on pause for six weeks because they have gone on vacation. I do not think it is fair to the Chief Technical Officer either to have them operate at a level below the Permanent Secretary. That therefore means that Government is continuously under pressure to fill that. Similarly, I believe that beyond the Permanent Secretary, can a Permanent Secretary in today's world be adequately be responsible for finance, administration, human resources and then policy too while advising a Minister? That is "gootmuh". I should

not say that word because I do not know if it is a word from the English language.

Asides.

HON. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I am told the Attorney General says he cannot get it spelt but I am sure that the Bishop would help me spell it.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that I think we have reached a moment in time where we need a small committee of three or four persons to do a rapid review of our Public Service over the next few months and to come back to us with respect to structure and how to be able to make us a more seamless organisation, making the terms and conditions of workers very clear. There is nothing more demoralising for a public servant than to be acting in a position for years without being appointed, because it tells them not only about the money but that you do not care enough to finish the appointment and to allow them to resume normalcy in their lives. Mr. Speaker, I feel strongly that these are things which are within our purview to be able to fix and to be able to allow the system to work far more efficiently and effectively than it is currently working. The concept which I have of Directors General simply builds on what existed from Mr. Barrow's time with the Director of Finance and Planning.

At that time you had a Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Finance but you still had a Director of Finance of Planning because the purview that they needed to be able to stretch across from finance issues to economic issues to planning issues for the Government, that person then had a helicopter view to treat to the Minister in a different way. It is my judgement that we need it in a number of areas. We have already created one in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and you may ask why. It is because everything that we do literally in terms of policy, almost everything, has a foreign trade component in terms of aspects related to goods or services or investments once we are trading beyond our borders. Even just the simple things which we want to do, like making sure Bajans can work making uniforms and buy food for their families instead of sending the money outside for somebody else to make uniforms. Those implications come down to what wiggle room we have, what policy space we have with foreign trade.

Sir, we also have a Director General of Human Resources because under the Human Resource Department there are those who deal with the creation of posts and the qualifications for posts and appointments. There are those who deal with the actual appointments, interviews, and there are those who have to deal with the training

component of it, and therefore if you pigeon-hole that person into a Permanent Secretary's post, in my view, you are not going to get the kind of broad helicopter strategic-like approach that we need. Those are three in place already, and you may ask what the other three are in my view. We need one for social services in this country so that the purview over not just the Chief Medical Officer of the Chief Education Officer or whoever but that you have someone who has a complete understanding of how social services are delivered in this country rather than being boxed into silos because of the allocation of ministerial responsibility.

Then you need one in Foreign Affairs because there is so much happening in this inter-connected world now, Mr. Speaker, that it is impossible for us to function any day of the year without at some point having some level of interaction with people beyond our boundaries. Mr. Speaker, then of course we need one for infrastructure. You cannot continue without a Director General for infrastructure who has oversight over the infrastructural development of the country. Mr. Speaker, last night I left up here in Worthing by the sluice gate after 12:30. I was in the Bayland with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South along with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, the Minister of Home Affairs who is responsible for disaster emergency responses in this country, and he and I left up here. Mercifully, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central was able to action what we needed actioned this morning already, and the bottom line is that you need somebody who can look from the slippage in the Scotland District to the roads that need fixing, to the wells and water courses that need cleaning, to the signage that we say is critical; all of these things. If you have a Permanent Secretary for public works alone, the Permanent Secretary (Public Works) has no locus standi in the Ministry of the Environment dealing with the clearing of gullies and wells and waterways.

What good are we as a Government in the 54th year of Independence if we cannot have the confidence to say that our duty is not to learn by rote and to repeat by rote? Our duty is to construct according to what the public purpose is that we are serving. What is the public mischief we must avoid at all costs? How do we use technology to be able to better deliver what we need to deliver more efficiently in today's world, and who are the classes of people that we are serving? Is it the immigration officers today with this Bill? Is it the customs officers? Yes, it is. Is it the nurses? Yes, it is. Is it the teachers? Yes, it is. Is it the clerical officers? Yes, it is. Is it the administrative officers and the senior administrative officers? Yes, it is. All of these people. Is it the general worker? Is it the Sanitation Service Authority worker? All of these people ultimately are the people whom we serve in the public policy which we bring, but the public policy is not only for them to be appointed but it recognises that economically we will use a

non-fiscal tool -- to be more precise, a legislative tool, and I believe that is Page 26 of the Covenant of Hope -- to use the other powers of Government beyond tax-and-spend. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central knows it well, that we can regulate, that we can empower, that we can legislate, that we can facilitate, and all of these things lead to people spending money which leads to further economic activity in the economy and jobs being created in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we need to look at the construct with the six Directors General in order to be able to allow us to have that oversight that is sectoral is one of the problems that my Cabinet, and I want to commend my Cabinet Ministers for being as receptive to us remaining as a team as far as possible, because if we were to only drive activity in this country through silos we would not get half of what we are doing achieved. Almost in every instance where Ministers have to work with colleagues every day in order to resolve issues, in order for action to happen in this country, because the silo approach takes away from progress.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, I really would like a review of how we treat to the Chief Technical Officers. I am not unfairing them in terms of my reluctance to see them move to act as Permanent Secretaries, because I am conscious that this country does not have the luxury of delay or a buffer that we can overcome in this difficult environment and that I need all hands on deck. In fact, if we really want to know the truth, we have a shortage, not just in Barbados, but in the Caribbean community and that is why so many of the regional institutions are critical to us, particularly at a technical level. The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the Joint Regional Communication Centre that helps us with the vetting of all persons coming through whether it is on the welcome stamp or airport or seaport. That is simply an agency of the implementation agency for crime and security. The one in Suriname, CAHFSa that deals with agricultural health and food safety. I can go on and on with the other regional agencies that literally are there, because one of the key components of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, is in fact functional cooperation, because it is accepted that on our little small islands we may not have the population base and we may not have depth and breadth of experience that is necessary in order for us to keep a wide range of things before us.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken longer than I had intended to, but I think it is necessary. I think it was necessary because this Government has come here today to deal with unfinished business, to deal with 3 100 people who were hopeful before that who now know for certain that their issues are being resolved.

There is unfinished business with the conveyance of the national housing units that were promised for free by

the last Government, but for the most part have not been conveyed to the people to whom it was promised. Mr. Speaker, it means that those people in those housing estates Mr. Speaker, you have one in your constituency cannot go about their business. The Member for St. Michael North has many, the Member for St. Michael South East, the Member for Christ Church West Central, the Member for St. James South, they all have many, but they cannot have their constituents plan out their lives. The Member for Christ Church West, he is now the Minister of Housing so he knows that this has to be resolved. We may well have to resolve it by legislation. I have asked the Honourable Attorney General and the Minister of Housing to meet with a team of experts to see how best we can bring this thing, because the NHC is getting no revenue, the NHC still has a responsibility, but the people who are on the properties who would like to do something or go and borrow some money to fix up something within the context of...we cannot do it, because for more than 12 years they wait in vain. For those 450 people who paid down money prior to the election in January 2008, in the Throne Speech we have committed that they will receive bonds in the next few months in order to be able to return the money that they paid ahead of the promise that was given knowing full well that everything happened in a political silly season. To that extent in my view, we made this promise in opposition, they should not be made victims as a result of that and they shall have their matters resolved.

Mr. Speaker, this is the unfinished business of the last decade. Is it all over? Regrettably no. However, we shall continue to put all of the things that were not completed on the front burner for us to finish because we are conscious that we have places to go and things to do for the benefit of our people in this country who deserve better than what they got in the previous decade.

However, I simply say to them that we can only do it as well as we would like to do it if we walk together in common purpose with a common mission. I look forward to being able to help in that regard by making sure that not just myself, but all Members of this Government will do their best to meet with as many people and as many groups as possible to ensure that that common mission of how we take Barbados out of this challenging COVID times, how we meander the climate crisis which last night reminded us only too well is still very much with us. How we do all of this depends fundamentally on communication.

I am not going to surrender the right to properly communicate to those who call it to a simple PR. This is not PR. For those who believe that this is PR, it tells me that they do not understand, that the first step in the identification of a common mission is communication. The second step is being able to understand where the different players stand, and that is why I have been as clear as I have with respect to the choice that we have made in St. George

North and other matters that may or may not be known to people in this Honourable Chamber that will allow us to bring people who can pass a perspective on policies before they are settled because we know at the end of the day what motivates us, what is our philosophy and what ultimately we want to achieve with respect to the setting up of programmes and policies for the benefit of the people of this nation.

Together is how it shall be done. Through communication we will establish that common purpose and mission and togetherness I give you the assurance that this Government will continue to work in the interest of the ordinary people in this country and of people of all sexes and interest. I am obliged to you and I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Dr. S. E. BROWNE, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

Madam CHAIR: This Honourable House is now in Committee of Supply.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Madam Chair, there are a few amendments to the Bill. These have already been handed to the Leader of the Opposition. A couple of the amendments would have been put on his desk highlighted in bold this morning.

We have added an additional Section and therefore in the arrangement of Sections, we have inserted and additional number 7 and therefore what you will see is an arrangement which now has nine Sections. I beg to move that the arrangements be amended to include a new 7 which would say "Exceptions to sections 4 and 5".

Hon. Miss. C. Y. FORDE: I beg to second that.

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

COMMITTEE

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Madam Chair, at Clause 2, there are a number of definitions to be inserted and I will read them quickly. Definition of Director General, means

the Director General, Human Resources, referred to in Section 6A of the Public Service Act, Cap. 29.

“Established Office” has the meaning assigned to it by Section 2 of the Public Service Act Cap. 29;

“Public Officer” or “Officer” has the meaning assigned to it by Section 2 of the Public Service Act Cap. 29;

“Public Service” has the meaning assigned to it by Section 2 of the Public Service Act Cap. 29;

“Temporary Office” has the meaning assigned to it by Section 2 of the Public Service Act Cap. 29.

With those amendments, I beg to move that Clause 2 as amended stand part.

The question that Clause 2 as amended stand part was put to the House and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 3 was called and passed.

Clause 4 was called.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Madam Chairman, in the chapeau after “20”, I wish to amend it by inserting the following words “of the Public Service Act Cap. 29” and the words “Cap. 29” in line 3 was deleted. At Clause 4(a), I want to add roman numeral “iii” which would say, “(iii) a combination of temporary office and an established office,”.

With those amendments, I beg to move that Clause 4 as amended stand part.

The question that Clause 4 as amended stand part was put to the House and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 5 was called.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Madam Chairman, Clause 5 is to be amended in Clause 5(1)(b), roman numeral “iii” to be inserted “(iii) a combination of a temporary office and an established office,”.

I beg to move that Clause 5 as amended stand part.

The question that Clause 5 as amended stand part was put to the House and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 6 was called.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Madam Chairman, the word “be” was deleted and the words “have been” after “not” substituted. Therefore, the phrase now reads, “has a conviction which may not have been...”. In Clause 6(1) (d) and Clause 6(2)(b), the words “Director General, Human Resources” were deleted and the words “Director General” substituted. In Clause 6(2)(b), we are deleting the words and inserting the word after the phrase, “who has been processed by the,”. It would now read, “a person who is on medical leave for a period of at least three months accumulatively in any one calendar year and who has been processed by the Director General for referral...”

At Clause 6(2)(b), the word “Director General” is inserted in a similar context. It would state, “who was referred to a Medical Officer or a Medical Board by the Director General”.

I beg to move that Clause 6 as amended stand part.

The question that Clause 6 as amended stand part was put to the House and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 7 was called.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Madam Chairman, we want to replace the existing Clause 7 by adding a new Clause 7 which will read as follows:

“Exceptions to Sections 4 and Section 5

7.(1) Sections 4 and 5 shall not apply to temporary offices that were created in respect of a specific project; and the determination as to whether a temporary office is a project office shall be made by the Ministry responsible for the Public Service.

Clause 7(2) should read as follows:

7(2) Where an officer to whom Section 4 or Section 5 refers is prejudiced by the operation of either section, in respect of an appointment to an office by virtue of the provisions of either section, the Governor-General may appoint the officer to an office, the appointment of which results in the remedying of the prejudice.”

I beg to move that Clause 7 as amended stand part.

The question that Clause 7 as amended stand part was put to the House and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 8 was called and passed.

Clause 9 was called and passed.

On the motion of the Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. P. R. PHILIPS, Madam CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill, with amendments, in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of the Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. P. R. PHILIPS, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Public Service (Appointment) Act, 2020.

The question that the Bill be read a third time and passed was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:

6.00 p.m.

Mr. CLERK: Mr. Speaker, this requires a two-thirds majority, so there is a necessity to have an actual vote.

(The bell was rung at 6.10 p.m.).

The question that the Bill do now pass and be so cited was put and resolved in the affirmative without division as follows: --

AYES: Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW, Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY, His Honour G. A. CLARKE, Mr. E. G. HINKSON, Hon. G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL, Hon. R. St.C TOPPIN, Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID, Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY, Hon. I. A. WEIR, Hon. Ms. C. S. V. HUSBANDS, Hon. A. R. FORDE, Hon. P. R. PHILIPS, Dr. S. E. BROWNE, Hon. C. E. JORDAN, Mr. N. G. H. ROWE, Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND, Hon. Miss M. K.-A. CADDLE, Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, Lt. Col. the Hon. J. D. BOSTIC

Mr. C. McD. GRIFFITH, Hon. J. A. KING, Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN. Total 26

NOES: 0

GOVERNMENT NOTICES (RECOMMITAL)

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to withdraw the earlier Resolution and to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$18 457 789 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2020/2021 as shown in Supplementary Estimates No. 6 2020/2021.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (REVERT)

ADJOURNMENT

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

Dr. S. E. BROWNE: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. Speaking on the adjournment, I would wish to be able to speak and to commend to this Honourable Chamber the service of the Honourable Member for St. George North who, I believe, has written His Honour indicating that as of tomorrow he will be taking his leave from these Honourable precincts, more specifically, the Honourable the House of Assembly having served in this Honourable Chamber for 26 years as a distinguished Member of Parliament to the people of St. George North. Mr. Speaker, by now the public of Barbados is aware that the Honourable Member has also agreed to accept a position which I will have the honour of undertaking very shortly of appointing him as the country's High Commissioner to Canada to be resident in Ottawa and consequentially it will bring to an end his Parliamentary career which, as I said, has happened over the last 26 years.

Sir, I do not know that there has been a more affable person that I have served with over the last 30 years in public life. I tried hard last night in preparation for today to recall when I have seen the Honourable Member for St. George North angry. I think it may have been one or two occasions, but even in those moments there were so brief and fleeting that you might have been forgiven for thinking that it was his brother or somebody else but not him.

I came to public life on or about the same time in terms of representative politics. The Honourable Member for St. George North, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, there are others who are not with us now literally like the late Joseph Edghill and the late Duncan Carter. There are others who are with us but not in this Chamber like the Honourable H. Elizabeth Thompson who is our Permanent Representative at the United Nations (UN). All of us were in that 1991 crew that learnt it the hard way. We started with a defeat and that defeat set us on the right path thereafter. It taught us all that we needed to appreciate about public life, that the judgment of the people does not define you, that it is simply a judgment as to where people stand at that point in time and what they wanted at that point in time. The people who rejected all of us in 1991 embraced us, Mr. Speaker, willingly in 1994 and in the case of the Honourable Member for St. George North it was a case of going from strength to strength to

strength to strength. Anybody who knew St. George before 1994 and who know it now would know that whenever the history of this country is written and the history of that parish is written they will say that there was a representative who was able to achieve so much for his people, not just in the ministries that he served, the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Ministry of Public Works, but across the entire range of public and private and Non-Government Organisation (NGO) services in this country and I hold up the Honourable Member for St. George North as an example for those who are interested in public life and in representing people to understand first and foremost, your duty is to serve the people and therefore, after you serve and what you do for them can be brought into play. There are a few things and we will have a chance for greater and longer speeches because I am constrained by the rules of this Honourable Chamber but suffice it to say that there are a few things that I will forever remember him saying.

This evening the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said you cannot legislate good behaviour, but I must say to her that the real originator of that concept was the Honourable Member for St. George North who at a meeting that I should not speak about, in a place that I should not refer once told a predecessor of mine in dealing with legislation related to the abattoirs and slaughter houses that you cannot legislate out a culture and as simple as the language was that he used was as profound as the concept was that he was referring to. You cannot legislate out a culture and that what was clear was that even that even if something is bad for you, spend the time first trying to understand that either before or on a parallel track you have to bring people along with you because if the behaviour of people does not change or if the attitudes and values of people do not change you are not going to be successful purely by legislative prescriptions. Mr. Speaker, I have never forgotten it because it has served as a wise piece of advice for those of us who have been charged with serving the interest of people particularly over the last three decades in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Honourable Member for St. George North that his work outside of St. George North will also stand to be recorded as adding value to the people of this country. The Honourable Member started first and foremost as a Parliamentary Secretary, I want people to listen, he then served as a Minister, he served along a Minister in a ministry, he was in Ministry of Housing and Lands and he was in Ministry of Public Works and Transport but even when he was Parliamentary Secretary he had the occasion to act for a number of Ministers in that first term across a range of sectors and that gave him a certain breath of appreciation that he carried with him throughout his entire service in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I go further. The Honourable Member for St. George North was the Secretary of our parliamentary party for over 20 years. Indeed, it is only in recent times when the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have taken over from him that that honour that befell him stood. Indeed, he was the Secretary to the parliamentary party when I was moved ten years ago and the fact that it never affected our relationship and our friendship speaks both to the quality of friendship that we had and the quality of respect that we had for each other even through the most difficult of times.

Mr. Speaker, I say that conscious that we live in times where people are quick to curse and criticise at the scent of disagreement far less in the presence of disagreement. I have come to understand that in life it is not every ball that you can play and it is not every ball that you should respond to and I have watched quietly over the years - I attempted to call his name and the rules of this House does not allow me to call it today - as my brother from St. George North showed that even in the face of disappointment at times that you hold your tongue and remember why it is you came to public life. Not every day is sunny and in this representative people know that they do not have a fair-weather friend and that what matters is the trajectory and not the single incident that may cause emotions.

I also want to remind this Honourable Chamber for those who do not know that he did not just did not stumble into representative politics. I ran in 1994 and I ran in 1991. The Honourable Member has been closed and worked closely with successive leaders of this great political party starting with the late great Prime Minister J. M. G. M. "Tom" Adams a former Honourable Member for St. Thomas, continuing with the then Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the Honourable Sir Harold Bernard St. John, getting even more intense with the then Honourable Member for Christ Church West, Sir Henry Forde, and perhaps reaching its zenith with the former Honourable Member for St. Peter who, for want of a better phrase but using a colloquialism that says it all to Bajans, was a partner in crime for the Honourable Member for St. George North. Mr. Speaker, I think all of us know that and appreciate that there was a special bond between them.

Mr. Speaker, I want now to speak to the Honourable Member since 2018. The Honourable Member has served as Chair of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company forming and has had the difficult task of trying to bring order to the unfinished business of that agency that was left with conveyances done and moneys not paid and all kinds of other untoward things that had made it very difficult for the Minister of Agriculture and the Government to be able to resolve things as quickly as we would have liked, but he brought to that task equally his quiet confidence and his determination not to be ruffled by

anything. His willingness to consult, his willingness to be engaged and his even-handed personality have meant, for those who have had to deal with him, that his departure will in fact be a loss for all of us, but what we may choose to regard as a loss here I can assure you that the people in Canada will see as a gain for them.

The Honourable Member for St. George North does not go to Canada without experience either because he is exceedingly well-known to the Barbadian diaspora in Canada having served at the beginning of his political career as a Vice Consul in the Consulate in Toronto working closely with the Ministry of Labour and in particular with the Farm Labour Programme and it is ironic that he is now going to close his political career by returning not to Toronto but to Ottawa not as Vice Consul but as High Commissioner in charge of the affairs of this country in the nation of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my pleasure to have walked with this man, to have limed with this man, to have worked with this man, to have disagreed with this man because you cannot want a more agreeable person to have a disagreement with, it is true, and to have learned from him. This was the brother that would tell me do the job that you have as I have told many others let us do the job that we have, do not focus on the extraneous things, the noises and the other things that you want to do. Do the job that you have not the one that you want to aspire to because the best recommendation for the job that you want to get is doing the job that you have well. I know it is the same type of guidance that he would have given to his children and to those closed to him in St. George North all through the years, and I know that even in the face of difficulties... We all know what it is to have started projects and to watch those projects languished for ten years, whether it is the roads that were cut coming out of St. Helens, whether it is the pavilion at the Glebe, whether it is in my case in Canewood Hill or in the case of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas in Rockhampton Road, whether it was the housing project at Lancaster or whether it was the Scotland District Authority Bill that was never established but yet we could see the level of slippage in that part of Barbados that occupies one-seventh of our land area and we [have] ignored one-seventh of our land area for 10 years and seeing lands slipping into the ocean at Glenburnie and lands slipping from Horse Hill, right back down to the coast. Whatever it is, we know what it is not to have business completed, but it did not stop us from working every day, and the Honourable Member for St. George North distinguished himself, even in Opposition, even in the face of those difficulties of trying to bob and weave and achieving progress for the one person here and the one person there under the radar wherever he could have. And I commend him for that detailed level of committed representation to individuals. There are many people I know who would like to have been here today to see our

brother being elevated to a different form of service that will bring honour to the country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is not a usual occurrence in a Parliament but because of the manner in which the Honourable Member had chosen to take his leave from us, it would be remiss of me as Honourable Prime Minister of this nation and as leader of the political party to which the Honourable Member belongs, not to pay this tribute on the moving of the adjournment on 29th September, on the eve of his day of departure from the Parliament of Barbados after 26 years and 24 days of distinguished service. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is my pleasure to commend to you as the Honourable Speaker that at an appropriate time that some kind of occasion would be organised to allow all of us to appropriately say thank you to our colleague, our peer, our friend, our brother, and now soon to be with the more with the Government of Canada, our principal representative in the country of Canada. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, you have the Floor.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, just simply to associate the sentiments of those of us on this Side with those expressed by the Honourable Prime Minister in just to pay a few words in tribute to the Honourable Member for St. George North. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do concur one of the most obvious things about the Honourable Member is his very amiable affable spirit that was identified by the previous speaker. I have always found the Honourable Member for St. George North to be that way disposed. That has been for me a very pleasing thing. There are some who are of the view that all of us involved in politics are a strange breed of beasts. I have not found the Honourable Member to be of that type of disposition but I do concur that his amiability is one thing that commends him, certainly to me and I am sure to the public of Barbados particularly so to those whom he would have served in St. George North; sometimes the culture attaching to our practice of politics in the Caribbean context, perhaps not as bad as elsewhere, lends itself to manifestation of varying degrees of seeming hostility, even sometimes bordering on strong dislike and hatred, and in the context of that oftentimes character assassination, personal very grievous attacks are launched against your political opponents. I have seen that before I entered political life in the elective arena. I have seen that since I have been here and it probably would exist long after I am gone. But not everybody who gives of himself or herself to the type of service that causes him or her to be a part of the political culture is given to that type of hostility, it engenders character assassination and certain the Honourable Member for St. George North was I have never seen the Honourable Member engaged in that type of sordid undesirable behaviour and I think that his amiable spirit commends him as a person, his approach to political

debate, that particular feature, that lack of hostile, almost carnal disposition, that tendency to vilify people I think that commends him as a political practitioner in Barbados, and I salute him as well for that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member is one of those persons who constitute the other side who would have gone to church with me a few times, on my invitation. I appreciated that, I think it demonstrated not only an interest in inquiring into spiritual things on his own behalf but that it demonstrated some degree with regard for me in respect for my testimony and witness and I was happy to have had him coming to church with me a few times.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, regrettably, he did not get saved (sic!) as we express it in evangelical terms on either of those occasions, he may have come close but he did not actually get saved on any of those occasions but I think the evidence is fairly abundant that he lost some measure of enthusiasm for his better known extracurricular proclivities; that is something over which I did rejoice.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, did you take credit for that, the conviction?

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I think the exposure, the experience in the spiritual environment may have contributed to that. As he leaves these shores to serve the people of this country in another place, I hope that that period of life and service over there does not mark a return to those former days when his proclivities would have been known.

Asides.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: The Honourable Prime Minister is right, he has, on more than one occasion, confessed his sins to me. But I think he would have learned that confessing of his sins to me does not bring him salvation, that he has to confess them to our Father above, because in confessing them to me, he is confessing them to a person, a creature of like manner, as he himself is and he has got to call on the Higher Power in that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, were I to suggest that the Honourable Member is being forced out of office at this time would not be to say that the Honourable Member has said that to me. I want to make that clear. But having been here for 26 years...

Asides.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: This is not inappropriate; it is inappropriate in the minds who hear it because their thoughts are located elsewhere. I am very clearly saying that no-one can say of the Honourable Member that he has said to me that he is being forced out. I

am trying to suggest that he has got to be very clear that the constituents of St. George North and the people of Barbados understand exactly why he is doing what he is doing and why he is doing it at this time. It is in the interest of his own legacy that he makes it abundantly clear why he is leaving at this time. We are in Barbados at the crossroads in the social context of our experience as a growing country. We are in crisis times, serious crisis times in Barbados, and those who would want to take my remarks out of context and to suggest I am saying something which is indecent and inappropriate need to reflect a little bit more.

All I am trying to say is: You are leaving suddenly, you are leaving at a time when your country is at the crossroads socially, you are leaving at a time when we are facing our biggest crisis economically, and the decision to depart has come apparently suddenly. If one is genuine in one's sentiments towards the Honourable Member, one would want to be clear to advise him to do his best to make sure, as far as it is humanly possible, he communicates very clearly on the issue with reference to the timing of his departure and the purpose for which he seeks to serve the country in this new capacity. I commend the Honourable Member for his work in the constituency of St. George North. I do remember quite clearly, and I have spoken to him about this before privately and I have said it privately, travelling towards St. Joseph one day and going along Highway 3 and it was in the drop time. The canes had been cut and for the first time I noticed off to my right a massive housing development over in the area of Flat Rock, and I realised for the first time that the Honourable Member goes about his business in a very discreet fashion and that he was doing things in St. George North which were not necessarily obvious and evident to those who do not reside in St. George North.

I have later learnt and only in recent days that even the Prime Minister of the day, now departed from us, was surprised to see some of the things that the Honourable Member had done in the constituency of St. George North. I am commending him for his service. His service is not complete. The job is not done. Somebody else must carry on. There are still some basic things to be done all over Barbados, including St. George North, and I was through there a couple of nights ago and the old car went through an experience.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: It was not at the Barbados Labour Party meeting. Where was that held?

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: I was driving through on the other side. The other end of the

constituency, Mr. Speaker, and it was on Saturday and not Sunday night, and in the dark of St. George I traversed some very, very rough terrain in places like Ellesmere, around the borders of St. George North. It is rough up in there, and if I know how the Honourable Leader of Government and the Honourable leader of the party pursues her politics, it would not at all surprise me if there is quick address of those matters. They really do need....

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Alkins Land needs some help too, and down in Hindsbury Road, and you all are doing that, and I thank the Honourable Minister of Public Works, the incumbent Minister of Public Works and his predecessor of recent times for addressing the problem in Hindsbury Road. However, there is some work to be done in St. George North but none of that is to take away from what the Honourable Member has done in St. George, and I like to try to be as honest as possible when I speak. I think, as a political servant to the people, he has done a great job. I commend you and I wish you well going forward.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. I.A. WEIR: Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief but it would be remiss of me if I did not use this opportunity to lend my voice to share in the memories that I have had with the Honourable Member for St. George North. First of all....

Asides.

Hon. I.A. WEIR: The age difference between us would not allow for anything else, but I have to say that he was more of a mentor for me as a person getting into politics and who had no idea of the difficulties that one may face in getting into elective politics. Naïve as I was in believing that the journey would have been one where you would have had the cut-and-thrust of elective politics, the hard-core reality is that it was not just the cut-and-thrust of elective politics but actually the full responsibility of having to take on a Ministry which traditionally had been treated as a Cinderella ministry. That was with the encouragement of the Honourable Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

The Honourable Member for St. George called me one morning and he said, "I wish to congratulate you on your appointment. I have been a Minister for a long time and I want to work with you so that you will understand the journey that you are on as a Minister." Every Monday morning in my management meeting I would have the

Honourable Member for St. George North sit at my side to guide me through those discussions and to help me to be able to understand what it is to work with public servants because I had come from a private sector background, and at the same time to be able not to succumb to pressure. Many times he would intervene in the conversation by saying, "Minister, I would like to respond to this." Therefore, he had mentored me over the first year of my Ministry and my ministerial responsibilities to the extent that we were on a trip to Guatemala and during the conference I got a message on my mobile phone saying that a house was on fire in Rices, St. Philip. I showed it to the Honourable Member and he said to me, "Get up and leave the conference and go and deal with the matter." I then asked for an excuse, I went and I dealt with the matter, came back and reported, and he said to me, "It is not finished there. You have to go now and make sure that you contact the relevant Government department to make sure that as far away as you are, you are still serving those people in your constituency."

I will always remember that simply because he said to me also, "Politics is not how well you run your Ministry. It is how well you perform in your constituency and never ignore canvassing your constituency."

I also spent some time with the Honourable Member at the Miami Airport, Hilton over the weekend. There are some things that he shared with me. I did not even realise that we had so much in common in terms of socialising, canvassing the constituency and creating opportunities for people, creating opportunities for people and businesses in the constituency. When we compared notes, we were fairly similar in terms of our nocturnal activity in the constituency.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand your Honourable Member.

Hon. I. A. WEIR: Mr. Speaker, I fully appreciate the friendship that the Honourable Member for St. George North has extended to me and I want to thank him. I think his congenial personality would have served him well for the 26 years that he represented that constituency. I personally think that his departure from that constituency will create a vacuum or void that many will not be able to fill simple because of who he is.

He sat one day at St. Catherine's Cricket Club, he did not know me then and I did not know him, but I was sitting in the front row. He said to me, "young man, you are a business man, but one day I believe that you are going to move from business to a higher calling. This is how we do it", and he proceeded then to give us a public speech and

then turn around and said to the cricketers and members of the club, that is why we are elected.

He did not know me, but I remember that occasion simply because of the friendship we developed going forward. One day I happened to have had to go the Ministry that he was responsible for, the Ministry of Transport and Works I believe Honourable Member. We were sitting on a bench waiting to see the Minister. His secretary told him I was out there and he immediately came out and invited me to his office to sit down and discuss the matter that I went to discuss. Such is the character of the individual.

Therefore, I wish to thank you for recognising me and offering you friendship and I sincerely hope that our friendship will continue throughout our remaining lifetime. I thank for all of those nights that you came to St. Philip South to join me as well. Whilst I will not share the things we did, let me tell you that I enjoyed the intense pleasure that we were able to derive from those nocturnal missions in the constituency, visiting shops and socialising the constituents. I think it necessary to add that because after I finished saying intense pleasure, I saw that face of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and I recognised quickly where his mind is going.

Mr. Speaker Sir, on that note, I wish my colleague and friend all the best in the future and I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I will be brief as has been the trend. Just to say that the last two Tuesdays for me have been both sad Tuesdays, because here I am again today bidding farewell, not in a final sense in the one in which we did last week, but saying farewell yet again on this Tuesday to a very dear friend of mine.

We started our political journeys at the same time. We both contested in 1991 elections, we both lost. He lost a little better than me, but we both were determined that we had roles to play in this country and we were not daunted by that defeat.

He and I have very similar styles and I really commend his style. His style is that you really must put the interest of your constituents first and foremost. We are here, he is here, not because of how good a Minister he has been or how many speeches he made in this Parliament, but he is here at the will of his constituents. They elected him to come here and act on their behalf and he recognises that his first obligation is to his constituents.

His style really was one of total emulsion into the constituency first and foremost. You can only seek to represent people if you know the issues that they had to deal with. You do not learn about people and their issues by being in Cabinet or being in Parliament. You deal first and foremost about their issues by among them as much as possible. As I said his style and my style in politics have been very similar over the years.

For him, there is no us and them, it is we together. That is how he operates his political life, getting to know people, getting to know their needs and putting their needs first and foremost and serving their needs.

As I said he was and still is more than a friend of mine and I was very flattered when he said at a branch meeting at which he spoke some two weeks or so ago, that when he received a call in connection with this matter, I was one of the people he called to discuss the matter with, and that is true. I am just going to say we spoke and I trust that he took my advice and here he is today.

Politically, he has always been present at events in my constituency and for the purposes of attending events that I held, although he has other interest in my constituency as well. However, I deeply appreciate it and he had reciprocate and similarly invite me to events in his constituency and I also attended those events when invited.

For me, today I am already starting to feel a void as a result of the exit of the Member for St. George North, because for me in addition to all I have said about him, in my view, he represents part of the soul and the conscience of the Barbados Labour Party. For me, through you Mr. Speaker, I am going to miss you Honourable Member for St. George North. I really am going to miss you.

I think that your involvement in politics brought a level of decency for an institution that is really besieged and be-legal by many and cursed about which all manner of negative things as said. I must confess I have heard the name of Gline Clarke being called in anything dishonourable in his political life. Therefore, I think he can really serve as an icon and mentor to a large number of young, upcoming and aspiring politicians. He has done 26 years of unbroken service in Parliament. We are tied but he has lost. I can say, Mr. Speaker, that he has to be commended because 26 years in politics it is true that no one sent for you and told you to be a politician. However, when you serve 26 years you have made some sacrifices in politics; you have. Mr. Speaker, he has given a number of his years during the prime of his life as well, in service to this country for 26 years and he has to be commended for that.

He has done well and also given quality service. I will simply end by repeating that I am going to miss him

and to use a phrase which I heard recently, the person who will succeed him has to be prepared to wear Size All because the shoes they will have fill are extremely large. Well done, my brother. Go and serve us well where you are going. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the Adjournment. Regarding the Honourable Member for St. George North, what you see is what you get. If ever there was a man who was true to himself without apology, it was the Honourable Member for St. George North. Sir, when I came into politics I came through the Minister of Education. She called him, "Uncle Gline." I was introduced to Uncle Gline. Uncle Gline, I guess started to see me not as son, Sir, because he had enough of those but as a nephew. He saw me as someone else that he could try to influence positively. Before I was fully appraised of all the facts, I got some sterling advice from the Honourable Member for St. George North.

He told me that you have to know when to speak up and when to shut up. He told me to not be afraid to leave your mark. He told me to make that sure to build your legacy. I was not understanding where he was going with all of this, Sir. It became clearer a lot later about leaving my mark and building my legacy when he told me in the same conversation that I had good genes, and needed to have a lot of children. Sir, we had multiple conversations about this and I realized that one of my political heroes was a polar opposite to me. I spent all of my life trying not to leave my mark and he spent his whole life trying to leave his. He did say to me, Sir, that he has one regret in his adult life.

He showed me all of his children. The Honourable Member is so proud of his children. You cannot find another father in Barbados as proud of his children as

the Honourable Member. I admire him for a lot. I admire him for being just a truly great man. He said to me confidentially as recently as a week ago that in his adult life he has but one regret. He always wanted to have more children than his dad who had 10. I could not make up these numbers, Sir. These numbers had to come from the man himself. He wanted to have more children than his father and his father had 10.

He conceded that at the moment he is lagging slightly behind but you never know. At which point I tried to give him some good "neverly" advice that in the same way he said to me that you need to know when to stand up speak up and shut up, I said to him that you need to know when to stop. The Honourable Member is a good man and great representative. To his children, through you Sir, you can hold your head up wherever you go in Barbados or the rest of the world because you have a father that you can be

proud of. To the people of St. George North, I say you have a great representative who is one that you can be proud of.

To the BLP, the Honourable Member for St. George North is a Member that we can all be proud of. To Barbados, as country, a community and family it has a son that Barbados can be proud of. Sir, if you will convey those sentiments through your office to the Honourable Member, I would be greatly obliged. Thank you.

Hon. E. G. HINKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking on the Adjournment, it would be totally remiss of me if I did not say a few words on behalf of a true friend on his retirement from this Parliament, His Honour; the Member for St. George North. Sir, I was doing a quick count of the number of elected Members of Parliament who have served for over a quarter of a century. There are certainly no more than 20, Sir. I believe that there are about 15 since the time of the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Herbert Adams. There are certainly no more than 20 and possibly around 15 Members.

This House has the honour to have three other Members who, of course, fall within that category besides His Honour; the Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Member for St. Michael North and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. His Honour is in a small exclusive category of individuals. It takes a tremendous amount of commitment and dedication to be able to serve for 26 years to the month having been first elected to this Parliament on September 6th, 1994. The Honourable Member has served outstandingly. He has served his people. He has shown the humanistic side of politics and how representation should be done; service to people, constituents as a whole and to individuals.

Each constituent of St. George North would have some connection with His Honour and that irrespective of political affiliation. As has been said, Sir, His Honour is one of the most affable people to have entered politics. He is someone who gets along with everyone. There are very few occasions you would have seen him angry as the Honourable Prime Minister said. May be once or twice but that does not last too long and he is able to get along well with his political opponents which is the key fact and that is unique. I always say that the retiring Honourable Member for St. George North is special, a special individual. As I said, I count him as a friend, I am God-father to one of his children and I think you could permit me, Sir, even though I have not mentioned it, to call her name, Sheridan, and, of course, we do not recognise strangers to the House of Assembly, but some of his children are here with us to hear these speeches in honour of their father. As has been said, you can hold your head up high through Barbados knowing that you are children of one of the most respected persons to have entered politics in this country and not only to have entered, but to have

won six successive elections on a trot. From the time I became a member of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) in 1993, as I said last week, I have been given associate membership status. Even though that is not one of the membership statuses in the Constitution of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) I was granted associate member status in St. George North. It was one of the branches and His Honour Gline Clarke was one of the Member of Parliament. I assisted tremendously. I believe he pointed that out in his announcement of his retirement two Sundays ago at St. George Secondary School. I supported all of his events and his fundraisers. I remember His Honour Gline Clarke would have had a retreat a Sunday down Bath with his key personnel in his branch and I was there as well and I always used to speak, I believe, every year at one time at one of his branch meetings and I felt it was my duty and obligation to support His Honour, the retiring Member of Parliament for St. George North. St. George North as we know, Mr. Speaker, it is one of those key seats in Barbados and it normally goes with the winning party. His Honour has been able to hold the seat even when the party went into Opposition in 2008 and continued in Opposition in 2013 and that speaks to the measure of his representation as a Parliamentary Representative. He increased his votes virtually every election except the time in 2008, of course, when we went into Opposition. In other words, he won still and comfortably against the swing and then again in 2013 still holding the seat. I know in 1999 with the party doing the best it has done before last election he would have won by 2 900 votes, I remember that, and of course, we are holding secrets for him in this tribute, Sir, because I would not say what he told me he spent most of the day doing on that election day, but still was able to win by 2 900 votes and, of course, this time peaking in terms of his vote count by winning 81 per cent of the votes and you do not get better than that, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Some of us did better that but I mean in terms of St. George North. I got 84 but I mean, within the context we are talking about St. George North, Sir.

The Honourable Member is going to Canada and as the Honourable Prime Minister has said he will be going back to where he started his public service to this country based in Ottawa. I know he will do extremely well. I know Ottawa having been a student there 35-36 years ago, the Barbadians there will love him. I am sure that many of them know him and certainly know of him already. There is a strong Barbadian community there. The Barbadian-Canadians who have done quite well in terms of their socio-economic position and, of course, Canada being one of the main friends of Barbados among the countries in the developed world. I know he will do well and serve well.

The time has come for His Honour to pass on the baton. I always say that politics is like a relay race. You do your best for the 100 metres that you run in the 4 x 1 and then you pass on the baton that time has come. You cannot run all the race yourself. He would have done tremendous work for his constituency of St. George North especially within the ministries with which he would have been given responsibility for Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, but not only for St. George North within the context of the whole nation and I thank him as well for giving me the opportunity to continue my public service which started out in 1994 when the party retook the reigns of Government. In the second term in 1999 I was his Deputy Chairman of the National Housing Commission and a part of the period I acted as Chairman. In 2003, I was also his Deputy Chairman of the Building Authority and I thank him for giving me those opportunities to serve at those levels with the people of Barbados. I really commend him and wish him Godspeed in his new appointment as High Commissioner to Canada and I thank his children, his family, for giving Barbados the opportunity to share their father with us and, of course, in particular, to share their father with the constituents of St. George North. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Hon. C. E. JORDAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Speaking very, very briefly on the adjournment, I do not go back all the years that some of the previous speakers have an additionally I do not move around too much at night so there is a limit to what I can say in this situation, but I want to speak just briefly to two things. One is that in St. Peter, and I think I need to say this especially given that my predecessor is both not here in the Honourable Chamber and obviously not around, the Honourable Member for St. George North has always been known as a friend of St. Peter. I have heard people talk about all the places he has been. I do not know where he found the time because during the election campaigns he was always in St. Peter and I want to say to him on the behalf of the people of St. Peter who I now have the real privilege to represent, thank you for being a support to our former Member of Parliament because often he could not be around, but the Honourable Member for St. George North was always there so that those of us in St. Peter recognise that even though our Member of Parliament was all over helping other candidates, there was somebody who was supporting him by their presence, speaking on platforms not just at the national level but even at spot meetings sometimes the Honourable Member for St. George North would be there to support our Member of Parliament who was Prime Minister of the country, so I want through you, Mr. Speaker, to thank the Honourable Member for that support to our Member of Parliament and to our constituency.

Secondly, the Honourable Member has spoken to me often about his work while acting as Liaison in Canada and I want on behalf now of my ministry to say to the Honourable Member that we look forward to the benefit of his experience as he takes on a new role not as Consul but as the person who is overall responsible for the relationship with Canada, as the Honourable Member for St. James North just said, one of our most reliable allied, a country that recognises that it needs to help us and bring us along and work with us as equal nations in the world and on the world stage. We are sure, and I am speaking on behalf of the ministry, that the Honourable Member in his new capacity will bring to bear the benefit of his experience and now the benefit of his new role so that the great relationship that our ministry has in the seasonal agricultural workers programme as well as the temporary farm workers programme we will be able to develop more and we expect to be able to intensify the relationship and ultimately to bring significant benefits to the people of Barbados who are interested in going to Canada to explore opportunities for work.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Honourable Member for 26 years of unbroken service. I like all other Honourable Members who spoke believe that he leaves a tremendous legacy of what is real representation. Like the Honourable Member for St. Michael West based on what I heard my predecessor say, I believe it is true that he under the shadow of night maybe did a lot of work in St. George North that my predecessor, the former Honourable Prime Minister did not know about but it speaks to the interest he has had and has in seeing his constituency developed and I want to take from that lessons for myself in terms of looking out for those who sent me here to make sure that at the end of the day whenever that day is people can look back and I can look back and like a person named Gline Clarke can say I have done work to improve the lot of the people of the constituency.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I perhaps speak from a unique position in this Chamber. I believe, though I can be corrected, that I am the only Member of Parliament who has the Honourable Member for St. George North as his Member of Parliament.

Asides.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: My association with the Honourable Member goes really far back but it is in fact a multigenerational relationship. My parents have been ardent and vigorous supporters of the Honourable Member from the time he first ran in the constituency of St. George

North and that association has continued into another generation of Marshalls, and I want to commend the Honourable Member for the manner in which he has represented the people of St. George North.

Mr. Speaker, I have not had to complain to him too much about roads or buses or any things of that sort but I have seen first-hand how the Honourable Member has related to all of his constituents. He like the Honourable Member for St. Andrew I think are among the few Members of Parliament who receive individuals from far and wide beyond their own constituency. So legendary has his generosity of spirit become that people from as far north of St. Lucy and as far south as Christ Church think nothing of going to see the Honourable Member. Sometimes it could even be a little embarrassing because I have heard that some people from St. Joseph even go to see the Honourable Member for St. George North when somehow they feel that I have not been able to deliver on the goods.

Mr. Speaker, I consider myself to have been very fortunate to have had him as a Member of Parliament but I also consider myself to have been fortunate to have served in Cabinet with him. I had that distinguished opportunity between the years 2003 and 2008. I have served with him in Opposition and I am serving with him now in Government.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Honourable Member has set a trend for politicians that we should all follow, well at least in some respects. I had planned to begin this short commentary by referring to a quotation: One day a son will follow his father's example and not his advice, but I worry now that there is fear in following both his example and his advice. Mr. Speaker, be that as it may, the Honourable Member has certainly been an inspiration to all of us as Members of Parliament particularly those Members of Parliament who have now come into these hallowed halls. His inspiration is one that I am convinced will long be with us. As long as we follow in terms of the representation of the people the footsteps of the Honourable Gline Clarke all of us would do well by our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate and thank the Honourable Member for 26 solid years of serving the constituency in which I live and in which I have always lived but I also want to thank him for being an inspiration to a whole host of Barbadians who recognise that in a man like the Honourable Member for St. George North you can come to serve in the highest office of the land even though your origins might be modest. The Honourable Member certainly serves as an inspiration to me and I wish him God speed. I have every confidence that he will continue to represent Barbadians and Barbados wherever he might go and no matter what or no matter where, the Honourable

Gline Clarke will continue to be an example that we should all follow. I wish him well and I wish him God speed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I saw the resignation letter just last week it really hit home what was to come in relation to the resignation of a man that I have called uncle Gline, and I think I am okay to call him that this evening as well, but a man that I have grown up with, who have seen me from when I was very young emerging to the woman that I am today. I consider myself to be one of the many children that he has. From a very young age the Honourable Member for St. George North has been very close to my family. He has been a very good friend to my father. Like others I share the view that I have never seen him angry. For those who know my father's tongue know that from time to time a few bad words may be highlighted but, but notwithstanding the Member would still come back the next day for something to eat or drink and sit down with dad, and that has been the individual that I have known for the greater part of my life, a man who has remained humble true to the people of his constituency, true to his roots and where he has come from, a man who is a grassroots man at heart but a Barbadian and proud Barbados Labour Party member.

There are times in life that I suppose as a politician you do not like to come and one of those times, I suppose is that even when you lose an election or you die, I am glad that we are at this point where "Uncle Gline" has had the opportunity to hear from many of us how we feel about him while he is living because too often you do not get to have this opportunity to hear how people feel about you and how they appreciate you as well, whether in terms of being a politician or just an individual, and I think that he has demonstrated for me what is meant by sacrifice in public life. Many people may not know the history and there are some things that I may not be able to speak to but I do know that he has understood well how leaders have emerged in this Barbados Labour Party. He has been at the feet of one such leader who emerged and I know that even on this journey where he has resigned is supporting the current candidate Senator Moore, that he understands that there is a greater purpose for him and for the sake of the Barbados Labour Party, that he will do all within his power to make sure that we are able to achieve our mission, no matter what happens. That to me is the true character of a man.

I recall as well when we won the election and he was asked whether he was going to cross the floor and he said resoundingly no. he was not offered a position or ministry at the time. He was asked would he leave the Barbados Labour Party, would he cross the Floor and again he said no. and I think that has been testimony to the type of

person that he is, that no matter happens he is a die-hard Barbados Labour Party man and will forever be a die-hard Barbados Labour Party man. For that, I say thank you to the Honourable Member. to his family I know how it is being a child of a politician where the politician is often not at home and giving their all to the constituency and to the people of Barbados and I know it could not have been easy for any of his children to have had him away from them and certainly his extended family for the amount of time that he was. He was busy making lots of family to look after him in his old age but I am grateful that they have given him to us and that he is going on now to another journey where yet again he can represent this country and represent Barbados proudly. Canada, as has been said before, is no stranger to him. I know that the people there really do love him and really respect him as well. He has gone a lot in Canada. Many of my earlier days going to Canada were spent in his home at the time when he was holding the post there also. And so it is interesting that I have the opportunity to speak as the Honourable Member is departing this Honourable Chamber and is moving on, because the Honourable Member has been there from the time I entered politics, whether that was in the Senate, recommendations for Statutory Board, to give me the opportunity to understand how Government works, whether that was the Leader of Government Business or even being able to be elected as a Member of the House of Assembly. "Uncle Gline" has always been there and will continue, I believe, to be there until the bitter end. He is a spirit that I do not think that anyone can hold a grudge against for too long; a man who has spoken his mind and that I think is what I love about him because at every opportunity that he has been given, he has made it clear that he has his views and whether or not you like them those were his views and that he was going to here and say how he feels about a particular issue. He has been passionate about education and with me as Minister of the Education, Technological and Vocational Training I often shared his views on education, always wanting to offer counsel and guidance but perhaps most importantly, always reiterating that you have to love the people, and that is the type of representation that he has given and I think that we really totally appreciate.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to say again, thank you and well done on the behalf of all Honourable Members of this Honourable Chamber who have spoken and we look forward to great things for you in Canada. the Honourable Prime Minister has set the tone for what is to come for people in the Diaspora being able to give back to Barbados and I believe you have a perfect opportunity and a wicket from which to bat when you go to Canada, to be able to drum up the necessary support that is required for us to take Barbados forward. Mr. Speaker, Sir, again, good luck and God's blessings to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East, you have the Floor.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a must, I have to say a few words, Gline is an inseparable friend. Like all of us, this is my fourth term as a Member of this Honourable House; five [terms] before that in the Senate, but all along Gline Clarke has always been my buddy. But it means more than that to me. I feel honoured when I see a village boy like Gline Clarke who emerges to become a Parliamentarian. There are very few of us who sometimes come up through the ranks from the village to become part and parcel of what is called a "political class", which I really do not know what that is. But that is some concoction that a few people would want you to believe that there is some special class of people called a "political class". You are a village boy and now you are a Parliamentarian.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I regret knowing what you represent that there will be a void and I hope that whoever replaces you would also be symbolic of the representation of that specific class of persons, because we have to hold to the values that represent who we are. I like the things that you have said over the years. I have always described you to my colleagues in the Pan Africanist Group as a quasi-Pan Africanist -- whatever that is supposed to be. You were not absolutely committed to the rigidities of the philosophies of Pan Africanism but at times there were little remarks.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: He was very sympathetic to... I remember you running into a battering on one occasion in relation to strongly supporting the policies of Mugabe and for quite a while in the House of Assembly I would hear the Honourable Members referring to you as "Mugabe" in a very disparaging manner, while I admired you very much for what you were saying, so I knew that you still had some credible groundings in those circumstances. Mr. Speaker, Sir, Gline must be respected, because as a boy from the village, Gline also set about to explore the frontiers of knowledge before he became a Parliamentarian. He was a teacher and obviously he went onto the University of the West Indies as an outstanding student in the area of colonial history and in elements of economics and so on. Gline has used that in helping to shape the kind of individuals that he has been.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what I admired about him a lot; I know persons said that he had a way of getting things done and [that] he was more a conventionalist so [that] when people were keeping a very close look on him because they believed this was how systems and structures ran in today's world, Gline would always produce a community centre somewhere. I do not know how to describe you, Gline, but

Gline would produce a community centre somewhere and nobody ever had any discussion about the community centre but the checks and balances were in place and the community centre would be there. I always described him over those years while we were in here as a special magician who was able to transform a rural community into an urban one. I always say he urbanised a rural community because most persons would tell you the sugar belt of Barbados, which is St. George, Gline transformed that over the years into almost a city, like a city centre.

I remember one of his colleagues who was a representative in close proximity to where he represented asking me, "How can I speak in that manner about this Gline Clarke," because he had done so much work within that constituency because other people felt he had done the work to the disadvantage of them. They felt at the time I should not have said credible things about Gline, but the evidence was clear. You work, you have always represented your people in St. George, but if you go into Charles Rowe Bridge and you see the transformation of the physical structures in that area, and as the Honourable Prime Minister said, if you saw it then and now you see it, you would be able to see the mirror of the work which Gline Clarke did inside that community. Gline Clarke went up the hill and then Gline Clarke put up the police station and the court. He went up a little further and he ended up in a market. Then Gline Clarke turned and went to Flat Rock and you see a housing development emerged or mushroomed.

Then there is a network of roads across St. George, so Gline sometimes was not in a Ministry but a project that would normally be executed from within a specific Ministry would mushroom inside the constituency that Gline represented. How did Gline get a sports centre and all of these things in St. George? Nobody knew but Gline would get the job done. I believe that credit should be given to him for being a visionary. Some people may not want to put it like that but he was able to get around all of the administrative encumbrances sometimes that stop people from moving as swiftly as they ought to. I am fully supportive of the view as well that Gline is an amicable individual, and to be honest with you, totally devoid of emotion almost. Even in recent times when I was facing all different forms of....

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Even in recent times when I was facing all the different challenges, Gline dealt with it in a very passive way. When I get to my house I would hear Gline was here, and then when I see Gline he would say, "Listen, man, you cannot operate with that kind of contempt."

Mr. SPEAKER: The voice of reason.

Hon. T.A. PRESCOD: Yes, he was able to resolve things. He said, "You cannot operate with all of that contempt in your heart because of these challenges. When you come into the political world these things happen." He also said, "Allow love to prevail. Let us resolve these things, man. These things are not beyond you." He would probably expand it to say, "Countries went through wars, and then one day two leaders would get up and shake hands and these things would be resolved. We do not have to go through this and then a lot of lot of battles occur as though you are in Grenada. It is Bernard Coard versus Maurice Bishop or you have the battle going ahead between Trotsky and Lenin in the Soviet Union." I can imagine Gline Clarke talking to me and I am fired up and totally irrational sometimes about these times, and Gline Clarke is this pacifist who will hold me down, console me and actually tell me, "Look, this is the way forward. Do A, B, C and D."

Sir, these are special endowments. You do not get trained at the university for that. I do not even know if you get trained at home for that but I would like to believe that your parents have imparted something to you, but this is a special endowment. All of us do not possess those specific qualities. If you do not know that about yourself, I tell you that now about you. You have those special endowments that even when people are ruffled and certain circumstances are present, in your calm, cordial manner you can bring them down to feel a sense of comfort. You are unique in those circumstances, so you are not just a politician but I think you are a human being, and I think that is fundamental; you have to be a human being. I do not believe that politicians must try to do something more aggressive and more militant sometimes, almost more anti-human, in order to prove that they know how power must be controlled.

Gline, personally as a friend I am sorry at this point that I will not be able to have a conversation with you.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: I do not know. I really respect him, probably a lot more than any of you could fully appreciate, especially within the last month or so. What I am saying to you is that, Gline, sometimes it takes a man like you being in the right place at the right time. Never underestimate the importance of a person who is endowed with those riches that lots of persons in here do not possess. Trust me. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition suggested, to me, that he is hoping that there would be someone like you to whom you have actually passed on something, or somebody else who will replace you and who, when these difficulties occur.... Normally, I would expect an elder. I have great respect for the African model of the importance of the elder as a person of wisdom and a person of experience; and you bring those two collectives together and those people can resolve many problems.

The Honourable Prime Minister knows -- do not mind that I go off-track sometimes -- that I am a man who strongly believes in the Ubutu faith, and I believe that love is fundamental. I strongly believe that. We are not talking about love as how some people will distort the definition of love. You gave a lot of love in life, but I am not talking about love in the manner in which it was distorted. I am talking about when I am because you are. I am because you are and, to me, you are a brother. When I come to St. George, I look for a Gline Clarke, I look for a Dwight Sutherland. Do you remember that speech I gave that is so special to the people in St. George? Some people felt it was not as special as it ought to have been but the reality is when I knock on any door in St. George and I speak to any Black man or black woman in that house, I feel as though I am speaking to Gline Clarke. Every household in St. George can feel a sense of confidence that were well represented. People are not stupid, people who were older and wiser than you, people who know your mother and probably know your grandmother and grandfather are the people who said this is my choice. Nobody could not change that.

The people of St. George as a result of them honouring you at every election that you went before them, tells you exactly how they felt about you and I am telling you that I also feel the same way about as a brother. I am going to be very conscious of your absence from these Chambers, but I believe because of these fine characteristics, you will go on to continue to perform because I like to believe that you are a very versatile man. There is lots of evidence that you are a very versatile man with many different skills.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I am sure that when you go up to Canada we will all be receiving positive reports about you. All I want to do at this point is to wish you all the best, hope that you continue to keep in contact with you dear friend so that if I am in troubled waters at any time I still know that I can reach out to Gline Clarke by seven digits and make contact. I wish you all the best in you new endeavors.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I just want to add my brief comments to my colleague and friend His Honour Former Deputy Speaker of this Honourable Chamber. To indicate that I would have known him for quite some decades now, him being in the teaching system for a long time and then entering the political arena.

I have always admired his cool, calm and collective demeanour. Despite whatever is happening I never saw him get angry for a joke over all of those years. I really envy him because I am totally the opposite and I believe having to work with him has cause me to temper a bit as well.

I know that he has been a community practitioner for many years and I believe some time in the late seventies or early eighties I would have met him and quite a couple of other young men from St. George including crowd and all of the volleyball and those community activities they were always engaged in, some of them being persons who would have been at Erdiston Teachers Training College with me. They were glued together like a real St. George team.

We developed a good relationship and I want to say that though he has come from very humble origins and has climbed to the highest heights, he still remain extremely humble. They are very few people who can do that with any ease. It is a trait that I believe more of us should hold on to, because despite wherever you come from, I believe humility really takes everything and people gravitate towards you because of that humble way in which you present yourself and the paying of attention to issues that might seem insignificant to him or to us, but he will make sure that he give a calming word and an easy response that will help to make that person feel more relaxed and collective. It is a special gift that few people have, but I know my colleague, former Member of St. George North has possessed all of those wonderful traits.

Of course he was a family man, and I had the privilege of going to Canada either two or three times and met his brothers who were there who is just as affable as he, in respect of the relationships that they had with people making others feel comfortable in their presence. I believe that that still continues even though I would not have seen them for quite a while now.

Mr. Speaker I also know that he is a wonderful father of his children, and not only his children, I know that he connected with so many other thousands of children who are attached to him in some way and perhaps like I am a godmother to so many hundreds of children, I believe he might be a godfather, because of the relationships that he would have had, not only with his neighbours but with his friends and his colleagues. I also think that that is something to be admired.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak to that easy going manner that he has. He moves quietly and smoothly without any fanfare. To me, it reminds of a swan that is swimming. It is moving on the water but the feet are paddling gently and moving on. I really admire that aspect of him Mr. Speaker and I pray that he will continue to be in

that vein despite whatever challenges may befall him in life. I believe that he will continue to be the man that he is.

I am proud of his stewardship because I know a large number of people from St. George North having been moving around in the constituency for so many years. I do not think that as barbadians we move around in a constituency and lend support to our colleagues in the way that it happened in the past and of course I would have met quite a large number of his constituents who have spoken extremely high of him. Mr. Speaker, you know sometimes people say wonderful things to you in your presence but as soon as you turn your back,..... we call them. However, I have never heard anybody speak in any unkind manner of the Honourable Member and I pray that he will continue to be able to follow in that vain.

When it comes to contention, when the fires are blazing, he will be there trying to put water on it gently. He would say, alright, leave it, ignore it, it does not matter, leave that now it is not important. That is the kind of personality he is that I believe the world should have more like him. Sir that is the only way people like me will get control. People of his demeanour throwing water gently and massaging. That is the character of the man.

I think really and truly that has made him the most preferred person in that constituency that he has represented for so long.

Mr. Speaker, as I come to a close, I also want to indicate that when his constituents go to him and constituents from all across Barbados he tries to treat to their needs discreetly but make sure that something positive comes out of it even if he has to call another colleague to say do you know so and so, the person came here today and these are the issues, help along the individual and I have been also able to try to see how I can maneuver to help them as well. I think that is laudable because sometime people come from all over Barbados because they know that you will listen and he is a great listener and because of his listening to others he is able to give them that element of support and comfort that something positive will happen. I am sure that most of the time that is really what it turns out to be.

He has done extremely good work in St. George North and I am not going to speak about it because other Honourable Members have mentioned it before, but I was really very proud of his performance when he was Minister of Housing and Lands and then with his stint in the Ministry of Public Works.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I want to say that this occasion is extremely touching and moving for all of us and we are all believers. Give people the kudos when they are living. We are going to give our colleague the kudos,

meaning the flowers and roses that he can smell them now, because it has become a Barbadian thing that people do extremely ordinary things to be able to make others happy. Ordinary people doing extraordinary things and hardly anybody says anything good. However, you know as soon as something goes wrong, the slightest thing that goes wrong with you, everybody tries to find something to tear down, pull down and drag down one's character.

I am glad that our colleague is going out with his name and character intact, because in politics it is very difficult. Every little thing somebody holds on to and add on and extends it, then people say well that is not the man that I know because of the rumors and Barbados love a rumor as well as we know and the technology is not doing any good for us anyhow. However, I know that my colleague will continue to keep his calm demeanour and do the best he can again in Canada to bring the name of Barbados to the good level it has and even help it go higher. I want to extend all God's wishes to him and blessings in his new engagement. I pray that he will continue to go to church when he is there too. There is no vote to be caught there but at least he will be resonating with the residents in the various communities across Ottawa. I am sure that will help to cement him when he is remembering the wonderful people of St. George North with whom he would have spent many years going to

church, having entertainment sessions, sporting sessions and all forms of activities with them.

I pray that he will continue to focus on Almighty God. I know that he will be sorely missed but I am happy he has been able to make that indelible mark in St. George North and Barbados. I pray that he will continue to have great health and strength as he goes to further his contribution to this wonderful country Barbados. I wish him all God's blessings in all his undertakings. Congratulations to you.

His Honour G. A. CLARKE: Speaking on the Adjournment, Mr. Speaker, I am ever mindful of the rules. I want to say from the outset that I was brought up in the Newbury Nazarene Church. My father was a Christian from the Brethren Church and my mother was a Nazirite. She was also associated with the St. George Parish Church, so I knew Anglicanism as well. I was always minded of Isaiah Chapter 40, verse 31. It states as follows: "They that waiteth on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint."

Mr. Speaker, I believe all Members of Parliament and people should be minded of that particular verse because it teaches us to be patient. It teaches us to wait. It teaches us that everything was never made in a hurry, so that for many years it is the verse that I keep near to my

pillow and I believe strongly everything was not made in a day. We know that God could have made the world in one day but he took seven days. The seven days to God may be 700 or 7 000 years to man. I must say to you that my father was very kind to me. I was born at seven months and I had some disabilities in my early years.

He would put me on his lap many days when the others go to sleep. He would be there talking to me and I listened very carefully. I grew to listen. I think listening is very important. Most of the time, politicians like to talk which is true but we must always listen. Once, I told the former Prime Minister, "I heard you." He said to me one day when we were going to St. Peter that he will do whatever he can to develop St. Peter. I said to myself, "Okay, I hear you." I took his words and said that I represent St. George, and will do whatever I can to represent and help the people of St. George.

I did not say any word to him. When he gave me the Ministry, I did exactly that but, of course, he was the Minister of Finance and he supplied all of the needs. Whenever he said that he did not know, I think he knew but did not want to bother me. It was the nature of the Prime Minister. From the outset, I always had good favour with leaders. I never had problems with leaders. From "Tom" Adams to the present Prime Minister, I had a good relationship with them. I had good relationships with Members of the DLP as well. In fact, former Prime Minister Freundel Stuart called me almost two weeks ago when this matter was announced and said that it was the greatest thing that ever happened, and that he was very supportive.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that my children who are here and family who are listening either here or abroad, and are very supportive of what we are doing here, I want to say to them thank you for their help. Thank you to the people of St. George North who have been electing over and over again. Many of the people across the diaspora and I have a friend in Georgia named Dr. Clement Alleyne who returns every year to help me and other persons whether they support me the BLP or DLP would come to support my campaign, in terms of helping me to canvass and asking for support. In these times with technology, people do not have to travel. I want to thank all those persons living abroad and throughout the world who would send messages to their family to support me over the years.

I want to thank also former Parliamentarians and colleagues such as Nigel Barrow who brought me into politics. Nigel Barrow would have helped us and, of course, the Prime Minister knows the days spent by Nigel Barrow when we were youngsters trying to get into politics. Nigel Barrow was very helpful in terms of helping us write. There were times when I wrote *On the Other Side* when we were in Opposition. I always say to a young

Parliamentarian to write and read. For years Prime Minister, Nigel Barrow, Ronald Toppin and I, wrote that column.

This is one of the things that young Parliamentarians need to do. We had inspiration from Nigel Barrow and I would want to see him before we leave, including Jack Odle and Lindsay Bolden who was a tower of strength to me, recognized. In fact, Lindsay Bolden gave me all of his equipment and he was a man with a lot of equipment in those days when I first entered politics in 1991. Of course, my dear friend and buddy Delisle Bradshaw, fought for me like I was his son. He fought for me when we were at school. When I attended Federal High School, he taught me history but we always had that relationship. I want to say thanks to him.

I remembered when we entered the race in 1991, he fought for my nomination. He was very close to me and it is through his voice that we won that nomination unopposed, so from 1991 we had that relationship. I had a special relationship with leaders of the BLP who were very helpful to me, such as Sir Henry Forde. I admired him because he writes and writes. He writes everything. I think I learnt that from him. Sir Henry Forde writes everything; every sentence he writes. I learnt that from him. He once said to me that I was using something like how he uses his pencil. I remember that for certain. I did not say much but he said he knows he will pass that onto me. Bernard St. John was my friend and colleague also. I admired him because of his brilliance. Of course, Prime Minister Arthur once said to me he was going to treat me like Ruth and Naomi and we became friends. In fact, I must say for the first time that I actually had a key to Ilaro Court, we were so close. He gave me all of his ties. Every trip that the Professor the Right Honourable Owen Arthur took when he travelled abroad to wherever he liked ties and he would bring a bundle of ties for me. I have ties that he gave that I have never opened, bags of ties. He like ties and that is what he used to bring for me. He shared that love with me and, of course, I had the same privilege with Prime Minister J. M. G. M. "Tom" Adams as well. Mr. J. M. G. M. "Tom" Adams was very close to me in those days. When I was there in Canada he visited me and I remember that trip we went to the CN Tower. I still remember the trip to the CN Tower and when we spent a lot of valuable times in Toronto during those years. Also to the person on the Other Side, David Thompson and his children, Freundel Stuart in recent times and, of course, my relationship also with our Prime Minister Mottley is one of love and she is like a special sister. I know that she will do well because she has a special vision for Barbados and I would want the Parliamentary group to be inspired by what she does. I have always said that we have good leaders in the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and I am sure that she is following in the path set and blazed by Sir Grantley Adams. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there are many persons now who would

want to ask themselves questions which you should now ask of your leaders. You must always ask questions of your leaders, sit listen carefully and ask questions. At the end of the day we have to follow our leader and that is important. I said to her some time ago, this is your time. I remember the problems that we had in 2010. I wrote her at the time and I told her at the time and told her then, this is not your time, you could not have saved the party at that time. I do not know if she remembers, that but I told her. I used to work with Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) at the time and I told her this is not your time, let it go. When her time came I told her this is your time. You have to not set the agenda and this is what she has been doing and the Prime Minister did say to me on the last occasion in 2018 when she met with me, she told me exactly: "I think you are better in the diplomatic circle" so when persons were asking me saying that I should be in the Cabinet I did not complain, I did not say anything because I knew - and I told her at the time and she was true to her word -- I want to see her time come true. I wanted to do well for her, our Prime Minister, in 2018. I set out to win that election and, of course, my colleagues at the time in St. George were saying to me that we know you are going to win. I remember Telly Howard saying to me we know you are going to win but we want the man to lose his deposit. That is what they were saying and I told her I will run this election and ensure that Barbados Labour Party (BLP) is returned to victory and then any number can play so I never fuss when I heard persons on the Other Side, calls from the Democratic Labour Party (DLP), from whatever source, but I said to them I will always remain faithful to the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). I will remain faithful to what I have committed to and that is what it is, therefore I would want to say to Members of Parliament that over the last 26 years in this Honourable Chamber I have come across some good people who remained my friends and I can tell you that one of the greatest advisors I have is Sir Richard Cheltenham, Sir David Simmons who is a member of my constituency, of course, I have admired other debaters like Sir Richard Haynes who would have been a tower of strength to me despite he was on the Other Side. He was a Newbury man, a St. George man and he gave me good advice. In recent time too, over the years I grew to understand and appreciate the knowledge of Dame Billie Miller. I think Dame Billie Miller made sense to most Members of Parliament and I listened carefully to some of the advice she said and, of course, believe it or not, one of my great mentors happens to be the Mr. George Payne. Mr. George Payne said to me once -- and I told him this because I served as his Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing for a period and he always said to us, you must either spend money or time in your constituency. I did not have money so I had to spend time and that is important. If you do not have money you have to spend time. I believe that George Payne is a great administrator. He is a person that sometimes will get hot but he means nothing. He will come back because he is still and will

always be a strong member of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP).

Mr. Speaker, I also came into contact with several Speakers as well over the years. Speaker Ishmael Roett, my friend, I used to teach at his Institute at one time and Speaker Michael Carrington was my friend, believe it or not, my good friend Michael Carrington. We have tour together and we limed together, he is a limer but, of course, Mr. Speaker, over the last two years I have come to know you and I appreciate you, Mr. Speaker, because I think that you are a genuine person that you can seek advice and I would want to say to you and to say to the Members of Cabinet, I think I told you this that as Speaker you have to -- in our system the Speaker has to beg and he should not have to beg and I told you so. We had agreed years ago that the Speaker should be given some help in his constituency because he is not a minister, but we have always agreed that persons will help the Speaker. In some jurisdiction, I think it is in England, the Speaker run uncontested and that is not in our system but there is good wisdom for that.

Asides.

His Honour G. A. CLARKE: Yes, others are appointed, but I think the Speaker means well and he is a great advisor to me. In fact, when the Prime Minister called me Mr. Speaker was the first person I spoke to and my friend Honourable Ronald Toppin. The Ronald Toppin is my friend and his whole family, for example, Roland. I can call Roland at any time and Ronald. They are my good, good friends. I really appreciate Ronald over the years. Ronald is a genuine Barbados Labour Party (BLP) man, a good man, a good friend and his family. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your great advice and counselling over the years. In fact, you are my special advisor on this matter. I will hold you to it.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, we have in this present Parliament good people. Of course, my friend Mr. Edmund Hinkson, of course, we went back far. Mr. Trevor Prescod, a good man who has worked with me over the years. I know that he has his beliefs, he is a panAfricanist. I believe also in some of the philosophy, but, of course, I do not necessarily wear the clothes. I believe though that that he is a great and good guy.

I believe that we have a number of young parliamentarians. I think that the young parliamentarians we have now mean a lot. They are brilliant people like their constituents. I spoke to Ryan recently. I like Ryan. There is something about Ryan and Wilfred and I believe that this party must hold these two young men and not only...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the Clerk was reminding you even though it might be your swan song that... I am giving you privilege. I am giving you even

beyond absolute privilege. Even though in this Chamber you have absolute privilege, I am giving you absolute, absolute privilege. In addition to having done 26 years and being the Deputy Speaker I think you are most familiar with the rules that you ought not to... You are saying Ryan, and I really do not know who is Ryan.

His Honour G. A. CLARKE: I mean the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. I think that these two Honourable Members are well educated and bright and they mean well for their constituencies and I would want to see them in Parliament for a long time and I hope that they will go on and better me, better this 26 years. I am looking forward to good work.

I also think that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South has a lot to offer. In fact, I believe that all of these young parliamentarians can do well in their constituencies if they follow the simple advice that they must wait on the Lord and do the things that are important because at the end of the day listening and waiting, they will be inspired by the work of other persons who have gone before them.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, to my great niece, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, that I once said to her father that I will not leave Parliament until she climbed the step with me and she will go left and not right. I said this to her father and I have seen it all. I know that she is now a seasoned senior Member of the Cabinet and a Member of this party and I want to wish her the very best in the years to come.

I want to also single out my friend the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who is now trying his best to grapple with the housing programme. We will work together to see how we can develop a programme to fast-track housing. Of course, my friend and colleague the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and his family has been around for a long, long time. His family has been extremely helpful to the Barbados Labour Party. I know recently that his mother lost her husband and the Honourable Member lost a father. I know that in recent times he has been closer to the family and I want to wish him the very best in the years to come.

There is also my friend the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. I must say to her that she has been a tower of strength. In fact, there was a time when we were the only young persons in the Barbados Labour Party. We are moving on in age and I know that God will give her the strength to carry on over the next couple of years and I want to wish her all the best.

I want to say to all Honourable Members that we in the Barbados Labour Party have a good future but we have

to play the game safely. We have to do the things that are necessary to uplift our constituents and we have to do things to uplift Barbados.

I also want to say to Honourable Members that we have only one leader and let us rally behind her and let us do the things that would inspire her and help her to go forward as we go forward with her.

Mr. Speaker, I too would like to salute the Clerk, Mr. Pedro Eastmond, who has been my friend for over 20 years. I met him over 20 years ago and I am sure that he has developed from strength to strength. He is well respected throughout the Commonwealth and I want to thank him for all the things that he has done to help me along the way.

I also want to thank the staff, the ancillary staff, the Marshals, the Reporters and the clerical officers who are working with the Parliament. I want to say thanks to my special friends Carol and Ruth and of course my darling girl Rose. I will miss these people who have been very helpful to me. To all the other staff members who are too numerous to mention at this time I want to say to them keep doing the work.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I know things are tight with the Government at this time but I believe that we need to look to see how we can better the conditions of service of the clerical staff. I learned only a couple weeks ago that the conditions of service is not what the Barbados Labour Party would want at this point in time for the junior staff, the maids and so on, and I would hope that overtime the Prime Minister in her wisdom could look at how we could better the conditions for work at Parliament.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have to say this before I leave. There are many persons who feel that from our mission and what we do here that we have great reward, that things are so good and that parliamentarians have all types of benefits. Parliamentarians do not have benefits and I want to tell the public that parliamentarians do not have medical insurance. Parliamentarians do not have the benefits that other people have. There is only one parliamentarian I know and he left after one term...

Mr. Speaker, we get a constituency allowance and I have never spent my constituency allowance on me. The money that I get as a constituency allowance I spent all of it in the constituency plus more.

Mr. Speaker, the average man out there feels that we are so better off but we are not. During this COVID time parliamentarians in their respective constituencies have been spending and spending over and over again. I believe the time has come for a better deal for parliamentarians. Parliamentarians do not have security and I think all

parliamentarians should have some form of security whether it is a camera or something but we do not have this. I know it is a cost but I believe that we need to look after our parliamentarians much better.

In other jurisdictions, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, even Grenada, the Honourable Prime Minister have a better deal than us and I believe that we have to do something for our Parliament and Parliamentarians, from the junior staff, right up, because we have a good Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, over the last 26 years I must say to you Honourable Prime Minister that I have never had a problem in this Parliament. I love Parliament. It has a good staff but I think the time has come for us to look at how we could better the lives of a Parliamentarian, not necessarily by more resources because we would not be able to afford that but conditions of service need to be improved at this time.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to say a final goodbye to the Honourable Members of Parliament and to all staff and to my constituents. I will be here, I will be around for the by-election as I would want to ensure that Toni Moore is well-received among my friends. I know that some of them are concerned; only this morning at 7.30 a.m., my son said to me that a car was outside, that somebody wanted me. I went outside to that person, who said to me that he has voted for me over the years. I told him that I wanted him to vote for Toni, that I was going to encourage all those persons who have voted for me, especially in some areas, that in the next few days and whenever the Honourable Prime Minister called the bell we will be moving along with her. I vow that I will help her because not only did I know of her but I knew her father before and I know that she is a talented person. I know that she is committed to whatever she seeks to do. So I want to encourage all Members of Parliament, all members of the Barbados Labour Party family to rally behind Toni and give her that support. We have to work hard, we have to defend our territory and we will defend our territory as much as we can. I want to encourage all my families and friends, all my friends across St. George and around, to pass that support that you would have given me over the last 26 years to this lady. I would want to encourage all of you.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to say, like St. Paul to the Ephesians:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wise of the Devil."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I want to close this Tribute to you, so that I have to speak on the Adjournment also. It has been a privilege to have worked with you for the past two years and four months. I remember how every Tuesday you would call to ask me if everything was alright, if I needed any help. Normally, I am sure that there are some Deputy Speakers who do not do that, so I want to thank you for that. You have learnt me a lot in the past two years and four months. I think that a lot of young Parliamentarians do not know that much about you. I have learnt a lot from you in the past two years and four months. I do not know from where you find the resources. I thought that I could beg but there are not that many Parliamentarians (trust me, Honourable Members) who can beg like the Honourable Member for St. George North, in many ways. He finds the resources from areas that you would not believe that he could. I do not know how his hands [could] stretch, but business people are very receptive to the Honourable Member for St. George North and he shares (well, I do not know if with you) but I know he shares with me some of the things that he has received, so I am very grateful to him, especially in these COVID-19 times. He has been the benefactor of good tidings from sources, as I said, I thought I knew sources, from people that you would not believe. As I said, he shares. This is why he has been able to win so handsomely in St. George North but he goes about in his way with a great degree of humility, very unnoticed but effective and for the last two years and four months the Honourable Member for St. George North has always told me and repeatedly told me that all politics are local politics, so that he spends all of this time in his constituency. And that is why he has won so handsomely and continues to win so handsomely and I have learnt that from him, that is why he has been a successful household name and I want to thank you for sharing that with me, so it is not about the glitz and glamor, that is not his Honourable Member, it is about service and he has done yeoman service to St. George North for 26 unbroken years. And many persons would really be asked and to take not so as to do just these small finer but effective things.

Honourable Member, I want to thank you for being, as I said, a very supportive person, even in my constituency. You would sometimes call me on morning. People from my constituency have the Honourable Member's telephone number. All kinds of people from my constituency would call this Honourable Member and he would call me and say: "Do you know that John Browne asked me for something?" I do not know how he knows these people, no wonder he got around on a nocturnal basis. I think that is reflective of how he has graced the length and breadth not only of St. George North but of all constituencies, rural as well as urban, so that his name is a household name, as a politician in more ways than one. I will not tell people to practice everything that he has done but if it means doing things to enable you to be a successful

Parliamentarian, then you should hitch your wagon to the Honourable Member's steer. Honourable Member, I thank you kindly. Honourable Member, I think it is just a matter of the Adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with that we have come to the end of today's Sitting. I now beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned, to be resumed October 13, 2020, at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be now adjourned until Tuesday, October 13, 2020, at 10.00 a.m. was put and was resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the Sitting accordingly.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Order No. 02, speech of Hon. D. D. Marshall. Part way through the Attorney-General's speech, the words 'Mr. Speaker, one of the commitments in the BLP Manifesto is headed by four simple words' have been set as a speech label, so that the following passage (about 5,200 words) prints under that label rather than as a continuation of Mr. Marshall's speech. Printed as in the source; the label should be checked.

Q3. Order No. 02, third reading and division. The procedural notes are contradictory: the question was 'resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows', then, after the Clerk advised that a two-thirds majority required an actual vote, 'resolved in the affirmative without division as follows', followed by AYES (26) and 'NOES: 0'. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 03, Address to the Governor-General. The Address states that a vacancy 'has this 30th day of September, 2020, arisen', but it is dated 'Approved by the Honourable House of Assembly this 29th day of September, 2020'. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 02, Committee. On the House resolving into Committee on the Bill, the Chair says 'This Honourable House is now in Committee of Supply'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 02, speech of Bishop J. J. S. Atherley. Two paragraphs of the Bishop's speech, beginning 'Sir, it goes on to cite' and 'Sir, I am going to skip down', are marked as procedural lines and so print in italics. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 02, title. The Order Paper line reads 'the Public Service Appointment Bill, 2020', while the third reading cites 'the Public Service (Appointment) Act, 2020'. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Government Notices. Notice was first given of a Resolution for \$16 607 700 under Supplementary Estimates No. 6 2020-2021; after the third reading that notice was withdrawn and notice given of a Resolution for \$18 457 789 under the same Supplementary Estimates No. 6. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at the Worthing Corporate Centre on Tuesday, 29th September, 2020 at 10.00 a.m., the Speaker, His Honour A. E. Holder, presiding; prayers were taken by Rev. Father Mark Harewood. The Minutes of 22nd September were confirmed. The Speaker read a Proclamation of the Governor-General, Dame Sandra Prunella Mason, dated 28th September, 2020, declaring under section 28A of the Emergency Management Act, Cap. 160A that a public health emergency exists in Barbados. Standing Orders were suspended.

On Order No. 03 the Speaker directed that the letter of resignation of His Honour G. A. Clarke, the Deputy Speaker and Member for St. George North, be recorded and the seat declared vacant, and on the motion of the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, an Address was agreed asking the Governor-General to issue a writ for a by-election under section 5(2) of the Representation of the People Act, Cap. 12.

The Attorney-General, Hon. D. D. Marshall, the Member for St. Joseph, moved the second reading of the Public Service Appointment Bill, 2020. He recalled the Public Service Act of 2007 and said the Bill, under the Manifesto commitment 'Helping People to Live', would appoint temporary and acting officers to their posts without regard to the requirement for qualifications. Between 1 000 and 1 500 people would benefit, the exact number being unknown because the public service's systems were not computerised; the Royal Barbados Police Force was excluded, and a 'Levelling Provision' in section 7(2) would let officers who felt prejudiced seek a remedy from the Governor-General. He also referred to a housing programme for public servants earning under \$4 000 a month.

The Leader of the Opposition, Bishop J. J. S. Atherley, did not oppose the Bill but cautioned that it should not become a permanent departure from the normal system of appointments; he cited the Forde Constitution Review Commission's recommendation on the political rights of public officers and called for a Public Service College. Hon. C. E. Jordan answered him on the 2018 election result. After the luncheon suspension and a notice of a supplementary Resolution, Hon. R. R. Straughn, Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, Hon. W. A. Abrahams, Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde and Mr. N. G. H. Rowe supported the Bill, Mr. Straughn and Miss Bradshaw speaking of officers overlooked through seniority or political affiliation.

The Prime Minister, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, spoke of 'unfinished business', saying that arrears of almost \$1.9 billion owed by the Government had been reduced to about \$300 million and that tax refunds were being paid, and proposed a small committee to review the structure of the public service. The second reading was agreed to. In Committee, Dr. S. E. Browne in the Chair, the Attorney-General moved amendments to clauses 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7, including a new clause 7, 'Exceptions to sections 4 and 5'. As the Bill required a two-thirds majority, a vote was taken at the third reading: 26 Ayes, no Noes. It passed as the Public Service (Appointment) Act, 2020. Miss

Bradshaw then withdrew the earlier notice and gave notice of a Resolution for \$18 457 789.

On the motion to adjourn, the Prime Minister paid tribute to His Honour G. A. Clarke on his leaving the House after 26 years, and Bishop Atherley, Hon. I. A. Weir, Hon. R. St. C. Toppin, Hon. W. A. Abrahams, Hon. E. G. Hinkson, Hon. C. E. Jordan, Hon. D. D. Marshall, Miss Bradshaw, Mr. T. A. Prescod and Miss Forde joined in. Mr. Clarke replied, and the Speaker closed the tributes. The House was adjourned until Tuesday, 13th October, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.