
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

THE SENATE

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, April 24, 1996 at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator C. L. BOLDEN, (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. R. R. FARLEY (Minister of Industry, Commerce and Business Development) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator Miss C. Y. FORDE (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)

Senator T. E. BARKER (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Senator Miss O. P. SYMMONDS, G.C.M.

Senator D. T. GILL

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE

Senator N. A. LYNCH

Senator N. P. WELCH

Senator Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON

Senator C. A. MASCOLL

Senator J. A. WORKMAN

Senator Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON

Senator S. P. BERNSTEIN

Senator the Venerable Archdeacon J. L. SPRINGER, G.C.M.

Senator Mrs. V. J. DAVIS

Senator C. LeR. TROTMAN

Senator C. K. LAURIE

Prayers were led by Rev. Errington Massiah.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I am commanded to lay the following documents before the Honourable Senate:

1. The Representation of the People (Expenses) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 1996.
2. The Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 3) Order, 1996.
3. Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year 1995.
4. Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Port Authority for the year ended December 31, 1994.
5. Health Services (Food Hygiene) (Amendment) Regulations, 1996.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE SITTING

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY, SENATOR Miss P. O. SYMMONDS was appointed to act as Chairman of Committee for the remainder of the day's sitting of the Senate.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING
OF A BILL TO AMEND THE POLICE
ACT, CAP. 167

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to move the second reading of this

Bill to amend the Police Act in order to make provision for the recruitment of police officers from among special constables. The proposed amendment, Sir, to the Police Act, Cap. 167, mainly centres around amendments to sections 24 and 25. One, Sir, to allow for the enlistment of persons who now serve as special constables into the full service of the Police Force and the other, an amendment to the entry qualifications to bring them more in line with prevailing requirements for work within the Force.

Now, Sir, the current Act requires that in order for one to qualify for entry to the Police Force one must have attained the age of 19 years but not have surpassed the age of 30 years or has served previously in a police force for a period of two years or more. We have a situation, Sir, in which a number of Special Constables had been appointed, starting on June 24, 1992 and those special constables were appointed at the time when policing activities in Barbados required more manpower but there was apparent difficulty in expanding the ranks of the Police Force. Those special constables were therefore enlisted and functioned as part-time officers. The first group of some 18 persons at that time performed a number of ancillary functions to allow the fully trained officers of the Force to concentrate their time and efforts on crime fighting activities.

As it presently stands now, Sir, there are some 200 special constables attached to the Royal Barbados Police Force. Many of those special constables have served quite creditably and in fact a number of them have been absorbed into the regular body of the Police Force. The fact of the matter is that having served as a special constable does not automatically give one entry into the Police Force. One is still required to attend the regular training programme at the Regional Police Training Centre and go through all of the requirements of training before one is passed out from that centre and into the Police Force.

It is a requirement that persons who will function as police officers must undergo the requisite physical training, must undergo the appropriate training and drill. They must undergo the appropriate training in the law especially the law relating to arrest, interrogation and those other laws relating to our judicial practice in this country as well as training relating to crime prevention, detection, protocol and other matters. So that, Sir, the difference between a special constable and the full police constable, Sir, is really one of training. One, Sir, being fully accredited and able to practice the profession of policing in this country and the other being used to perform certain functions which do not conflict with the legal requirements. For example, special constables are used to give some very necessary support in the areas of general crowd control at some public functions, general patrolling activities in Bridgetown and around the urban environment and activities of that nature.

Sir, there have been a number of special constables who have gone on to the Regional Police Training School and for example out of the 19 Barbadian recruits that entered the Regional Police Training Centre in January this year 13 of them have been special constables. But, Sir, there are a number of persons who would have served as special constables from the inception of the programme in 1992 and those persons who would have served in a creditable manner and therefore demonstrated their qualities and characteristics which would suggest that they would make excellent police officers have, by process of time, bypassed the age of 30. And, Sir, this amendment seeks to provide an opportunity for those persons within the ranks of the special constabulary to be able to enter the Royal Barbados Police Force even if they have passed that particular age.

The Act proposes to amend section 24 to make the provision that if a special constable has been engaged for at least 3 years then that would make him eligible for entry into the Royal Barbados Police Force's training programme at the Regional Training Centre and if he proves successful there, Sir, to enter the Royal Barbados Police Force. I must say, Sir, that the Royal Barbados Police Force has been very successful in facing the challenges of crime and, in fact, you will want to note that for 1995 there were almost 1000 fewer cases of crime reported than there were in the previous year. But the exact figure is that there were some 10 541 cases reported in 1995 which is the figure of 911 less than for the previous year. In terms of that overall figure though, Sir, the challenges still remain. There were obviously most categories in which crime had fallen but there were a few troubling categories in which there had been some increases. For example, in spite of the overall decrease in crime figures, there was an increase in the category relating to serious bodily harm. There was also the troubling statistics, Sir, indicating a small increase in the number of rapes but in areas of theft from the person and other categories, Sir, there was a decrease.

11.25 a.m.

Sir, we must recognize that the task of policing in Barbados is one which is not an easy one. The Government is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of its general citizenry and any person who might be from time to time present on these shores. Therefore, we must take any and all necessary action to improve the level of security that is provided and to that extent, Sir, any action which is taken to improve the operational capacity of the Royal Barbados Police Force would certainly redound to the benefit of the wider society.

So that, Sir, in recognizing the constraints which are faced *vis-a-vis* the ability of a special constable to act in certain situations and the ability of a fully trained and accredited officer to act, we have decided that it would be important for us to seek to integrate the

special constabulary into the regular body of the Royal Barbados Police Force. We cannot, Sir, ignore the fact that police officers have to perform a multiplicity of tasks ranging from the fight against drugs, the fight against crime whether it be on the street, in houses, crimes against the person but also those other duties relating to traffic control, relating to education on crime prevention, relating to the other duties of investigating and subsequent follow-up. Much of the time of policing is used in prosecuting cases in the Courts or appearing as witnesses and that type of follow-up, Sir. So that there is considerable activity, Sir, and I have not made mention for example of some of the other duties that are performed by police officers such as serving as orderlies to the judiciary and so on.

So that everyone can agree that there would be need as time goes on to look at the overall role of the Police Force, look at the duties that are performed by the fully trained members of the Police Force and look to see whether there are functions that are performed by persons who have been trained and who are therefore qualified crime fighters, whether we can continue to look at what roles can be performed either by civilians or persons with special training. But that is not to suggest that we can take the position that one can necessarily place a complete hold on the training of officers and move to a situation of the utilization of civilian help in all areas to such an extent that should the need arise for a full complement of trained professional police officers that they will be found lacking in that regard.

Sir, another aspect of the amendment which I would want to speak to is the amendment to Section 25. The amendment of Section 25, Sir, seeks to – before I get to that, the other section that I was referring to is actually part of the amendment to Section 24. The further amendment to Section 24 relates, Sir, to one of the other qualifications of entry. I have already mentioned age on the one hand and on the other hand, Sir, the recognition of service either in (a) recognized Police Force for 2 years or (2) as a Special Constable for 3 years. But also, Sir, this amendment to the Police Act seeks to require that a person seeking to enter the Royal Barbados Police Force should be in possession of at least 3 CXC's certificates or the equivalent. As it says in the amendment, Sir, 3 CXC's at general proficiency grades 1, 2, or 3 or the ordinary level of general education certificate or an examination equivalent to those referred in the 2 previous sections. This is in recognition of the fact that the last time these qualifications were fixed which I believe was in the Police Act 1961 that the general level of qualification required for entry into the Public Service and even in the private sector, Sir, was a reflection of the general level of qualifications attained by the majority of persons at that time. Similarly, Sir, today this attempt to raise the level of qualifications required for entry into the Police Force is really just a reflection of the level of

qualifications which the average person seeking to enter either the public or private sector to perform the nature of tasks which one expects a police officer to perform the qualifications that they are expected to have. Like I said, Sir, the range of tasks which a police officer turn up for duty on any particular day will range from the fight against drug, controlling traffic, protocol duties as may be associated with various state and ceremonial occasions and the very important life rescue operation which police officers from time to time are required to engage in, Sir.

Sir, I am pleased to commend the amendments to this Police Act, but I would just want to remind Honourable Senators that the work of the Police Force in this country has always been important over the years and will continue to be so and that the Government will continue to institute certain reforms which will seek to improve the efficiency of the Force, which will seek to ensure that the public can look forward to an increased level of service from the Police Force, because we recognise, as all citizens in Barbados do, Sir, the importance of a law abiding and orderly society as a fundamental underpinning of social and economic development in Barbados. I am sure that other Senators will want to speak to this matter and will raise other matters relating to the amendments we propose.
11.35 a.m.

With those few introductory remarks, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

SENATOR Mrs. V. J. DAVIS: Mr. Deputy President, I will of course support the Second Reading of the Bill to amend the Police Act, Cap. 167, but there is just one observation I want to make.

I understand from the Leader that the qualification is for three CXC General certificates. I am going to question that, because I would prefer to see a minimum of three CXC Basic. The Caribbean Examinations Council is very concerned about the fact that especially Government and employers seem not to understand what the Basic is all about. The Basic simply means that one has acquired a certain standard which prepares one for further education. When we also consider that people who pass the CXC General are usually just about 5% or less of your student population, I think it is a bit unrealistic to say that we expect our police to have three CXC General when they are going to continue with their training and their education. It is also unrealistic in the sense that it tends to devalue the basic certificate.

I would like people to understand what CXC Basic is all about. Caribbean Examinations Council has said time and again that when a person has got the Basic certificates they are qualified to pursue higher training. The people with the General certificates are usually people

who – and a very small percentage – are expected to go on to university and to higher training. I am a little concerned that if you say three CXC General you are going to be excluding so many people, I prefer to see three CXC or even four or five CXC Basic as a minimum qualification. That is the consideration I want here, because, as I said, the Basic is a very sound training for people who are going to continue to be trained, like police and even in the civil service, so I think it is a bit unrealistic to say that they must have three CXC General.

That is all I would like to say on this.

Thank you.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support the instrument before the House, but like Senator Davis I have some comments I would wish to make before I do so. I would not wish, however, to let the occasion pass unless I made some passing reference to the point which she made regarding Basic and General levels of qualification.

It would seem to me, Mr. Deputy President, that that question needs to be part of a wider question that might in fact be better addressed under the current discussions and debate relating to education reform. I say that, because it is my view that it is not going to be proper for us to establish different and apparently contradictory systems of proficiency and efficiency for parallel areas within the public and private sectors. It would seem to me that if we are going to address in the way that Senator Davis has properly suggested we have to address the question of basic education and Basic qualification in the CXC versus General qualification for CXC, that that matter has to be revisited and that we have to be able properly to review exactly who is doing what, what examinations are being set and the reality as opposed to the original programme which was intended.

As it currently stands, I believe that most of the public sector requires the three subjects at GCE at the General Level and I do not believe that is a level of capability beyond young persons who are now going to be entering the public service in any form, especially in areas as important and as significant as the Royal Barbados Police Force. I would wish to believe that we have passed the days when the qualification to be a police officer was that you had to be big, black and ignorant. We have much passed beyond there and we have moved towards a situation where those persons have to exercise a level of intelligence which is comparable to the level of intelligence which has to be used by teachers, nurses and indeed by any other public servants within the country.

I wish to have it recognised too that we would not wish to build a police force, at least I would not wish to

see a police force built, which does not give an opportunity for a person who enters at the level of a police officer without stripes, which gives that person the opportunity to aim for and to expect that he or she may be considered to be Commissioner. If that person cannot aim for that, then I would suggest that they should be looking for another area of employment. If we are going to be looking towards excellency in this field, as indeed we have to be looking for excellence in all other fields, then I do not believe it is beyond our imagination to expect that at the point of entry police officers, as indeed all other public servants, should be able to attain the basic three subjects.

I want, however, to make this one caveat and to suggest that it is not my view that the attainment of paper qualifications alone is any indication of a person's excellency or a person's capability to enter into public, or indeed into private office and I would wish to see the requirement for academic qualifications matched with another form of qualification. If a person has served within the four walls of this particular instrument, if a person has served as a constable, if the person has acquired a certain age, if the person has not managed through the formal system to obtain the three 'O' Levels, I believe we have the capabilities within our country to do a form of interview and to be able on the basis of interviews conducted by the Commissioner of Police with a team of persons around him to determine whether that person has the wherewithal, the aptitude, the attitude and the capability within that person's character to make it within the public service without the necessity of having any academic qualifications be it basic, general or otherwise. I think in this country we have put a lot of faith in academic qualifications and I have no quarrel with that.

11.45 a.m.

I believe that in a country like ours where so much of our gross domestic product is spent on education we of necessity would reach that stage but, at the same time, I would not have us forget that there are many excellent contributors to the well-being of this country who were denied the opportunity for secondary education or who having gone to secondary education have not been able at the point of a written, formal examination to satisfy the examiners because of all kinds of emotional and psycho-analytical problems which the teachers among us will speak to. Perhaps it is in that area that Senator Davis was making her observations. There must be another form of examination and review of people's abilities beyond the narrow confines of how many "O" Levels one has or one does not have.

I wish to go beyond that point to make a few other observations, and you will forgive me if I do not allow the moment to pass to suggest that the occasion of dealing with the Police Act is an appropriate occasion for us to

look again at the conditions under which police persons work, to make the observation generally that they must have the opportunity to speak much more fully without fear of any inhibitions or any sanctions regarding their conditions of employment and their upliftment and promotion within the system.

Within that particular regard, I wish to urge upon this Honourable Chamber to request of the Attorney General that the legislation, which promises to allow the Police Association to function as a trade union within the 4 walls of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations, should be speeded up. It is a commitment made by the Government but it is a commitment which is fairly slow in coming.

I am aware that the Police Association as indeed the Fire Service Association and the Prison Officers Association have made certain detailed recommendations to the Attorney General in response to his invitation in that regard. But I think that it is very important that there be the opportunity for fuller debate and discussion among those persons so that there is not a possibility for decisions to be made which have the appearance of suggesting that they are not being taken as fully into consideration for their welfare as they ought to be, which brings me to another point, Sir.

The work of police officers in this country whether we are talking about constables, special constables who are recruited or persons recruited from scratch into the Force can be made better by different attitudes which might be adopted by the total society to the level of crime. We have to be able to reach positions where police officers who do their job without fear or favour and who attempt to bring a level of discipline to the country, who attempt to carry out their office as police persons in the best way they know how, that they are not made to appear to be criminals when in fact they are merely our protectors in the society in which we function, trying to make life better for all of us who are operating within this society.

I don't think that it has escaped on many occasions that the police officers are sometimes made to wonder whether it is not too frustrating to continue to carry out their exercise. It is true that we may have gone beyond the stage where some years ago according to reports – and this may be allegorical – a police person having stopped and having reported a member of the public for committing a crime the police officer was sentenced to 6 months at Crabbe Hill.

We may have passed that stage of punishment of a policeman or policewoman for doing their job as effectively and as efficiently as they know how to. Nonetheless there are still elements and occasions when we do get the impression, if we hear the stories or we read in

the Press or sometimes we follow in the courts, that police persons are not the persons helping to defend the society but that they are the ones who are in fact appearing as defendants.

In this regard, I think that we have to recognise that it cannot be easy for them to do their job in a situation where notwithstanding what the Honourable Leader of the Senate has said about the level of crime coming down where the population in the prisons continues to rise. My information is, Mr. Deputy President, that there are now more than 800 prisoners in Station Hill and that cells which were built to hold only the one prisoner are now holding as many as 3 and possibly sometimes more than 3 persons.

This is not healthy. It is not good for rehabilitation exercises. It is not good for the well-being of our society and it makes us wonder whether we do not need to look again at how we are addressing the matter of the penal system as part of the overall system of addressing law and order in our country.

The level of white collar crimes as I am hearing *sotto voce* from one of my colleagues is something that would have to be addressed as well and the question of separation of repeat criminals or repeat crimes, if you want to use that language, versus first timers will have also to be addressed. I am sure that that is a matter which other persons would have spoken to in other places.

Addressing this particular matter, and without seeking to go too far outside of the walls of the Bill, I wish to make this point that the level of crime in this country could be served satisfactorily and the level of policing could be helped considerably if where criminals are deported from countries other than Barbados into Barbados in those circumstances of deportation the Government were to seek to have and were to reach an agreement in having the deporting country inform the Barbados Police Force in advance, send copies of up-to-date photographs of those persons and details of their MOs. I think that in your language, Mr. Deputy President, MOs would mean their particular methods of operating and committing the felonies that they are given to from time to time.

Certain remarks made by SENATOR TROTMAN were ordered expunged from the record by Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: I am suggesting, then, Mr. Deputy President, that in this matter of the protection of the society in the area of crime that our police force can be very seriously assisted by all areas of support that can be given by our communities in this country, by all areas of support which can be given by our locals and by other persons both outside and supportive of our locals

and that if we were to get that level of support from the well-being of the country as a whole we might be able to reduce the level of crime without thinking that we have to match the level of crime with the level of police persons.

I do not share the view that we will ever be able to increase the number of police officers as the demand might require and I believe therefore that each of us may have to work harder in our particular fields. We might have to increase the number of neighbourhood watches. We might have to enter into joint educational rehabilitation and improvement systems with the Commissioner and his staff in an effort to ensure that we make the society a safer place for all of us to live.

Those are merely a few comments, Mr. Deputy President, but with those comments I would wish to make it clear that I support the amendment to the legislation.
11.55 a.m.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this matter before this Honourable Chamber this morning but have a concern that I would like to raise and hope that it would merit some consideration at another time.

As the Leader of Government Business stated in his opening remarks the importance of the Police Force. It is essential to ensure that we have a functioning Force that takes care of society which is rapidly expanding and where there is quite a bit of crime. My concern is to the fact that this job is one which carries some risk, or is a high risk job, to put it simply. My concern is that because of those risks, the types of insurances available to the members of the Force are inadequate. I took the time out this morning to have a chat with a person in high office within the Force and I just wanted to get my facts straight because I remember during a recent campaign talking with policemen on the ground and I was appalled and especially concerned that there was little or no insurance offered to them in terms of personal injury and accidents apart from the National Insurance Pension. That bothered me significantly because if I were a young person seeking to go into the Force I would want to feel secure in that job knowing that if something should happen to me while in the course of duty that my family would be taken care of. That is my principal concern. It is simply to ask that perhaps sometime in the not too distant future, the question of insurances to cover accident and other types of insurances to ensure that the policemen who take care of our welfare that they themselves are taken care of. To date so far, we have policemen who have been brought down in the line of duty and their families, because they are not here to claim, have not received any sort of compensation thus far. This administration being the caring one that I know it is, has already begun to take steps to ensure that these needs are taken care of with regard to comforts and terms of

working conditions, I hope and pray that this would be a consideration in the not too distant future.

I do not think it is sufficient to expect individuals to take out insurances only on a personal basis but I think perhaps there must be somewhere – and I am sure there are other Senators who may expand on this more widely being involved in the area themselves. I speak of Senator Thompson who might be able to expand on that, but it worries me and it bothers me, and I would really like to see it come to us in the not too distant future if we are to ensure that our Force will attract persons who would want to stay in that Force comfortably and go past the 10 years which is the guaranteed time needed for a pension. I think a lot of them leave after that time to look for other jobs because as they get older they realize they are not getting as much as they deserve. To that end I would really want to bring to this Chamber that concern and hope it will be addressed in the not too distant future.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR Miss O. P. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy President, I wish first of all to associate myself with the remarks made by Senator Trotman about the standards expected of people entering the Police Force and to say that it is pleasing to see over the years that standards have been upgraded and expectations increased.

I have from time to time conducted courses in the Use of English at the Regional Training Centre and at seminars held for police officers. I have detected a level of achievement and a motivation among members of the Police Force.

The question of CXC Basic or General is one that has employed teachers from the time CXC started. Those of us who sat on panels when it was being implemented know that there has been this vexed question of the two-tier system. It is not an easy one and it is not one that you can just make a decision on without considerable dialogue, thought and discussion. I would think it might be better to have some Basic and some General but, certainly, I would think that to have people entering the Force with just basic subjects would be either to keep it at the same level or to decrease the level at which they have aimed over a number of years. Certainly it is not an incentive if you are looking at quality people.

I just want to utter a word of praise for the Police Force, not only because of the considerable risks they take, but also, I again have had dealings with the Resident Beat Officers when I was at school and been impressed with their professionalism. I know Senator Davis will recall the debates which some of them have held which we have assisted with as members of the Association for

the Teaching of English in order to help young people in various districts.

I also recall very recently the "Safety Handbook" which has been put out by the Police Association and which is a first-class effort. There are programmes on Rediffusion which help the general public. They can listen to them. Of course, there is the Police Band which gives so much delight and which can hold its own with bands anywhere in the world and is certainly one of excellence. Therefore I know there are problems, and in any institution there will be problems, but I think on the whole we in Barbados can be proud of our Police Force.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: Mr. Deputy President, I am going to be very brief. I will just be focusing on one particular aspect of the qualifications. We can be justly proud of our Police Force, as has been said, but we cannot ignore the fact that the police themselves have from time to time been concerned about what they have called "bad eggs" within the Force. I think in recognizing that this is the case from time to time, in spite of the good work that is being undertaken, we need to look at the feeder areas of the Force more closely and the methods by which people enter the Force.

I think that the upsurge of violence among young people, young school leavers and the increase, and we have been reading recently about the shocking news of drugs in schools and so on, that this must have some effect on the intake into the Force. The fact that this has always been so does not detract from the fact that at any time if it can be found to be influencing the calibre of persons within the Force that it is a matter for grave concern.
12.05 p.m.

What I have to say would be more in line of a question than a solution. I wonder to what extent those responsible for the selection process look very carefully at character and deportment of the persons who are entering the Force. I am not saying, Sir, that examinations and certificates are not important for I agree with all those who have indicated that we should look at the whole matter of certification again and I do agree that we should look at the Basic CXC as well as the General CXC because we are being put to shame in the fact that Universities overseas are considering our basic for admission and we ourselves are turning our backs on the basics. But, Sir, having said that I think there must be a way to evaluate those who are entering to ensure that as far as is humanly possible we try to exclude the bad egg element from entering into the Force.

I am aware, Sir, and I am sure others would have been aware of cases where persons were branded as and

found to be trouble trees in the school system and then the next thing you saw those persons walking in the police uniform. I do not know if they are found anywhere else at any levels of the society but I know for sure that they have been identified where even the schools that were responsible for recommendation did not think it possible to give testimonials to those students they still succeeded in doing what they wanted to do. So, my question would be, what is the process by which people are assessed character-wise when they enter the Force with a view to ensuring that they are of what we would call the best character or the correct type to enter into the Force.

I do believe in that connection, Sir, there must be provision made for proper psychological or psychiatric assessment of persons who are to work in such sensitive and important areas in society. If we have not got into that yet I think we ought to look at it very carefully.

I am going to support this Bill, Sir, because I think it is looking at the matter in the right way and even if all the things related to it are not in place I think we can from time to time improve upon it. The matter of the possibility now of someone entering through the special constabulary and being now able to reach the level of the Force I think is a plus in its favour and I will support it, Sir, but I hope we will look at character. Look at all the other areas but more especially at the character of the persons who are entering the Force. Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Bill but I also have a few observations to make. Firstly I am in total agreement with the Leader of Government Business that we need to examine the task and responsibilities of policemen, and I would add further, with a view to redefining some of these tasks and responsibilities in a modern era that has changed drastically from the time when my father was a policeman and when I lived at a police station. In those days policemen had a lot of power which they do not seem to have at this point in time and I do feel that there is this urgent need to look at these tasks and responsibilities and re-assign some duties to ancillary personnel and leave the police to work in specialist areas.

Mr. Deputy President, when I am talking about specialist areas I am also referring to the area of dealing with psychiatric patients, in keeping with the Mental Health Act. Mr. Deputy President, the police and the Barbados Registered Nurses Association have had two seminars to examine the roles of both the nurses and the police in the implementation of this Act. Unfortunately the Act has not been amended and I think the time has come again to have an update on those seminars.

I would also like to see, Mr. Deputy President, that it be made possible to recruit, for example, trained

psychiatric nurses, if possible, into the police force. I am not so sure how that could be done because as the Leader of Government Business said that everybody must undergo training, the physical aspect, the law, arrests, crime prevention, protocol, etc. But what I can see in the near future, because of the behavioural problems in our society, and the need for extensive counselling, and the need for rehabilitation, and the need for such persons like social workers and psychiatric persons, working either closely within the police force or recruited, put through the basic training and then move them up to a higher level where they could function in specialist areas. I hope that the time will come when we are examining the tasks and responsibilities of policemen that they would take that into consideration.

On the question of insurance I think that is urgent and I would like to support the Senator. I do know that all the ground work has been done regarding getting quotations but it was not followed through. Not only policemen are at high risk. They also need to look at nurses as well who are at very high risk and make provision for some form of insurance. Now I am not an insurance specialist. I do not know if it is called indemnity insurance or whatever it is called, but also make provision for them so that if anything happens to them at least their families would be taken care of or if they themselves are injured, as we have recently been seeing policemen and nurses being injured, that they would be taken care of.

Mr. Deputy President, I would also like to make a plea again for a copy of the laws to be given to us because I really would have loved to have looked at the basic Act. I know that it is available here but I really did not have the time and I hope that the time will come so that we will be able to have a copy of these laws so that we can make more intelligent contributions to the legislation as legislators.
12.15 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, I must say that I would like to say a word or two about the excellent work being done by our policemen and to congratulate them about the work they are doing, but in the same breath I would not like to see the entry requirements lowered too low because when one tries to make a case for salaries there will be comparison of the entry requirement for the salaries with those of other professionals, for example teachers and nurses. Then it will be very difficult for them to make a case to have their salaries upgraded. So one has to watch very carefully the level of entry requirement into the Police Force. Also, Mr. Deputy President, in a day like today where the criminals seem to be smarter than everybody else, we need people who can go on to extensive training, persons who can use computers *et cetera*, persons who could be trained in the various special areas that will assist the policemen in carrying out their tasks and responsibilities.

With no further ado, I support this Bill. Thank you.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Mr. Deputy President, I will be brief. I just rise to support the amendment to the Police Act and I would just like to say that some of the young police who are getting this training up at the Regional Training Centre should be taught a little more about the law. We find a lot of the new constables coming out and not being sure as to when they should make an arrest. You see them coming out there and they only learn this when they are on the beat after a few years with the senior cops and then they realize that they can arrest for this and that. But they really do not know when to move in as such and I think that they should really be taught their legal rights of when they should arrest and so on.

But the other thing about the new recruits coming out is that a lot of them seem to be afraid. They are cowards. True enough their opponents would have guns and ammunition and things of that sort, but a lot of the guys coming out here on the beat only got a baton. But there was a time when they used to do some serious self-defense at that Training Centre and I am not sure if that self-defense still continues. It would be good to see that some of our police are trained in proper self-defense. Let them get enrolled in a proper marshal arts system and be a little more confident while they are on the beat. So from that aspect, I would like to see them get more training and more confidence when they are on the beat.

The other thing that bothers me, Sir, and it bothers also Senator Trotman and he spoke about it but I have to reiterate it is the fact that we have this problem with overcrowding in the prisons. People are going up there with white collar crimes...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would not like to interrupt the Honourable Member. The question of overcrowding in the prisons cannot be put at the blame of the police and therefore we are debating an amendment to the Police Act. I think that we are straying away from what is before the Chamber when we move into that aspect of penal sentencing. That is something which is completely outside of the Police Act and should not be brought into the debate.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Sir, I respect that but the police are having a little difficulty and the wardens in the prisons are having a little difficulty.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I will not argue with the Honourable Senator. The question of overcrowding in the prison does not fall under the Police Act. It should not be debated in this debate.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Sir, are you saying that I cannot suggest that we can have a parole system?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am suggesting that you cannot deal with the penal aspect of the law. You are dealing with the Police Act. The police has nothing to do with the prisons and nothing to do with overcrowding in the prisons.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Okay, Sir. I respect that, Sir. I said that I was going to be brief. I will continue to be brief. I had a little more to say but I respect your ruling, Sir, and I have just been briefed again. Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, I rise in this debate not to be long but I am detecting some inconsistencies, though not surprising, of Government's management of the system. We have been told during the Education debate that 70 per cent of all children coming out of school are not certified. That figure was used nevertheless to argue a case for Education Reform in Barbados. Now this debate as it relates increasing the qualification requirement for policemen must be seen within the wider context of Education Reform in Barbados. That is in any one year we have been told that approximately 4,000 pupils may come out of school and that, if we are to assume that 30 per cent of them are certified, it means that almost 120 persons in any given year will have the necessary qualification requirement.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would like the Honourable Member to deal with the matter before the Chamber. If the Honourable Member wants to debate Education, I am sure there will come a time when the Honourable Member can use all the statistics he has and all the previous comments about children coming out of school to debate education. But I do not see how you can start a debate on education on a matter which is an amendment of the Police Act.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I expected this intervention too.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: And so do I.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Yes, I expected this intervention because it will get hot...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That is why I suggested that you deal with the Act.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Because I do not intend at all in this debate for you to suggest to me that I cannot discuss the issue of education when within this Act there is the whole question of the qualification for policemen in this thing and I am discussing that within the context.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member will follow my ruling otherwise I will have no fear of dealing with the Honourable Member. I have no fear whatsoever.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: In any case, I am saying that to raise the qualification requirement of policemen in this age is to suggest that a narrow pool of 120 persons per year who are certified in any given year will be reducing the amount and that those policemen will have to come from that reduced pool. Therefore, as a result of pushing up the qualification requirement for a policeman, we will have to think in terms of regrading the salary scales of policemen because you are now going to be competing as has been envisaged by this Government with a narrow pool of only 30 per cent per year of people who are certified which constitutes 120 persons in a given year. I am saying and I repeat that to ask people within that narrow band of 30 per cent per year to consider the Police Force as an alternative in terms of a job that we must think in terms of upgrading the salary scales of policemen. That is the context of which I am seeing the whole question of Education Reform as it relates to this debate.
12.25 p.m.

It therefore means, Sir – in fact, Mr. Deputy President, not worthy of “Sir” – it therefore means that the whole question of training will have to come into consideration, because we can anticipate that at least 5% of policemen, of the 1200 persons in the Police Force, may retire in any given year, and 5% represents about 60 persons, if I am correct. Even if you were to reduce it to less than 5%, say 2½%, that constitutes 30 persons, and those 30 persons would have to come out of 120 people. That is a large chunk of the certified people in Barbados in any given year, that constitutes almost half or almost 25% of the certified persons in Barbados. It therefore means that something is wrong. Either that the calculation by the Honourable Minister of Education is incorrect, that only 30% of the persons will be certified in any given year, and if indeed we were to use logic to show that in any given year 2½% of the persons within the Police Force may be retired, then we are asking for 30 out of 120, which constitutes 25%, or in the case of 5% retirement rate, 60 persons out of 120 persons in any one given year to be directing the energies towards the Police Force.

In short, I am prepared to show that this administration continues to play with numbers and continues to demonstrate that they are not clearly thinking through issues as they relate to the management of Barbados. A simple example shows it. There have been all kinds of bamboozling about certification in Barbados and that 70% of the people do not have certification in any given year, only 30%, so I repeat my call. If you are expecting to raise the standard or the qualification requirement in the Police Force, and that there is going

to be such a heavy demand to go towards the Police Force, then you have to provide an adequate remuneration to justify getting people to become attracted to the Police Force. It has to be adequate! There is therefore a need for a regrading, a reclassification of salaries within the Police Force based on demand and supply. Those are the forces in the marketplace that determine where people will go in any given year for jobs, and we are saying that the Police Force has to be expanded, or should be expanded.

If we were to expand the Police Force beyond the 1200 strong, it therefore means again that we will have to be thinking in terms of getting an even greater percentage of the persons certified in any given year. That therefore suggests to me a very strong argument for reclassification as well. In addition, Sir, if we accept that of those 1200 persons 10% or 5% may presently be certified in accordance with the new requirements, then we are saying that it will take no less than about 15 years to ensure that the entire Police Force is adequately qualified according to the new requirements. Again it lends folly to the whole question and debate surrounding this new requirement. Do you really need, in this day and age, to increase the whole qualification requirement within the Police Force in order to suggest or demonstrate that they can uplift efficiency and effectiveness within the Force? Do you really need to be overly concerned again in this society with paper requirements? Every time you turn somebody requires you to have this form of certification and then at the end of the day, in many jobs, you hardly utilise it except for the basic skills of English and Mathematics. It is not what you have, it is what you are prepared to do with your life and how you are prepared to demonstrate up ahead the capacity and the willingness to learn or acquire, and in any case in today's world these certificates may become very redundant when we move towards the kind of training, the kind of opportunities we are going to have up ahead. I am suggesting that more emphasis should be placed on retraining within the Police Force, because as I suggested earlier it would take no less than 15 years to replenish the entire stock of policemen in accordance with the new qualification requirement. If you are going to say to me that this requirement is going to uplift the Police Force, improve the performance of the Police Force, then you will have to wait for at least ten years to see the kinds of benefits you wish to see as a result of improving the qualification requirement.

As a consequence, the more immediate need is for training. It has to be the priority, not bringing only 30 or 40 persons per year into the Force with a new qualification requirement, when 1200 or 1100 of them still remain under the old requirement. What are we really saying? Are we really thinking through the management of systems within the Barbados society? Are we prepared to make these kinds of rash statements about certification? Are we

prepared to go this route and not understand the need for information, data, and to become more scientific in how we approach the managing of the Police Force as we see it?

Sir, I have said that I did not intend to be long, however I intend to be incisive. I have just demonstrated by way of a simple thought, of simple information, of information given to me by the Ministry of Education that there is no way in which we can reconcile education reform, the figures we have been given on certification versus what we expect or anticipate will be the needs of the Police Force in this year and the years ahead. On that basis I repeat my call that if you are going to be pushing up the qualification requirement for the Force you will have to be thinking in terms of reclassifying, regrading and making sure that policemen are far better remunerated in this society. I have demonstrated by the simple use of information that out of 4000 persons per year 30% are said to be certified, which is 120 persons, and that we are saying that in any given year we have a situation...

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. The Honourable Senator was better taught than that. He is misleading the House. 30% of 4000 is 1200.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I take the point, I made an error. In any given year the 1200 persons who are supposed to be certified, we will have to be thinking in terms of getting 60 persons, that is 5% of those retiring, which will provide us with a very healthy figure out of the persons who become certified. It does not make a difference whether I made an error with the noughts, what is important is the indicative nature of what I am saying. I am indicating in this debate, in fact, that we cannot be suggesting that you are going to upgrade the qualification requirement in the Police Force in a limited environment without appreciating the need of making sure that the salary scales within the Service are indeed far more remunerative than they presently are.

12.35 p.m.

This is the point that has to be made, whether or not there is a 10% or 12% is not important. What is important is that the fact that we are now requiring persons to be certified at this level and that the pool in any given year is limited is very instructive for the salary scales within the service. So there is an instant need for regrading and for persons within the association to be able to say publicly what they feel those policemen should be getting and not to have to go through all kinds of contortions in order to make certain statements about the level of salary which they recently received.

Sir, I therefore am quite clear that the optimal size of the police force cannot be considered as 1200 and it has

to be increased to some amount which I do not know; but it has been suggested that there is in fact need for a greater amount of policemen in order to do the job at hand. That has been suggested by me and if that is so it therefore means that it increases the need for reclassification within this sector. That optimal size can only be determined by sound research. It cannot be determined as we did willy-nilly by going into Brazil recently in Tourism and now pulling out in less than 2 months without any kind of research at all. It has to be sound research. You have to make decisions on sound research. You don't want to run down south and then come back north. You have to make decisions on sound information. This is what is happening.

That is why I am saying to you that decision to increase the size of the Force which must be seen now within the context of educational reform and must be seen as a critical component because that area is an area which has provided and will continue to provide opportunities for young Barbadians. It is a lucrative area. You can learn music. You can be a very good sportsman. You can get involved in cooperative movements. You can do all kinds of things within the Force. You can go and get legal training. It is an area of opportunity and will continue to be. But it must be seen within the wider context of educational reform. That is the point that has to be made in this debate.

I close Sir, with this comment that we continue to make decisions without understanding the wider context within which the decision should be made. We continue to talk about reform and educational reform and the like without understanding the broader picture. When you do these things you are opening up yourself to certain kinds of criticism and I now invite the trade union movement and the staff associations and the like to respect the need for some form of regrading within the police force as an urgent point to be examined over the next 2-3 years in Barbados. I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy President, Senator Mascoll will lead all the debates all around until it gets back to tourism. Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I rise to give my support basically from one who can speak with some authority on the police since I spent a lot of years at the police station, not in custody, but because I had the privilege of having a father who rose to very high ranks within the police force to be assistant commissioner to be exact.

Before I begin, and I know that people get off on the wrong foot, I want to say that I believe that the police are doing a good job. I know that the Attorney General spent a long time in the Other Place talking about the statistics proving that crime in Barbados is really on the decline. He also said that the Barbados Labour Party did not take all

the credit for that, that by the time we took over the Government in 1994 that crime was already on the decline and he substantiated it with his figures. Anyway, Sir, I do not want to be political about it at all because I think we are dealing with peoples' lives and I can divorce that from what I am dealing with here today.

What I was glad to see in terms of the statistics that were presented was that there was only one sex crime – this is the first time in many years – reported against a tourist or visitor to Barbados. That in itself was one in the entire year. I wonder if the Vagrancy Act had anything at all to do with that.

Dealing with the entry levels within the Police Force, Senator Mascoll took a long time to expand and talk about the statistics about how many people come out certified and are not certified. He talked about the level of CXC's you need or the level of qualifications. I think the Attorney General was clear when he said that you needed 3 CXC's, but he also spoke about a special test which would have been given to those who may not have met that particular qualification and therefore we simply have to have a guide on which to base whether or not we believe someone can make it into the police force.

Senator Springer spent a whole long time as well talking about the character of the people that we attract into the police force. I believe it is necessary to have some semblance of a guide by which we can go. If that in essence like any other place in the public service has to do with CXC qualifications, well, then, if that is not the guide that we are using, can someone tell me what is the best guide that we can use. We are not only counting out people who don't have 3 CXC's but giving other people an opportunity to take a test which looks at certain core areas to see whether or not they have the aptitude in the opinion of the force or the civil service to become a successful police officer.

Sir, I don't believe that even though there may be waning levels and I don't even know where Senator Mascoll got his facts from because he never seems to get the figures right. Apart from that, I believe that the whole economic state of jobs in Barbados is always going to be a drawing card within the police force for attracting people and however you look at it, no matter what the qualifications are we are still going to continue to attract people. I believe that what we really need to look at within the Police Force is the levels of retention. Anyone who is knowledgeable of the Barbados Police Force will tell you that there is a strong need now to retain policemen and let them make a career out of policing. We are finding grave difficulty in retaining police officers over any extended period of time, especially those who are able in some way to further their education.

The police was once a big and broad, open market for people. Now the police force is attracting university graduates and there are some people who come to the police force and who go on. One of the difficulties and the problems within the force is that a lot of these grads expect their qualifications to move them on and to promote them to give them accelerated promotions while other people within the force, the traditional police officers, are very clear that what one needs to do is to work and pass through policing and to spend time and get experience.

That, Sir, in itself is causing a severe conflict and rift within the Barbados Police Force as I speak. I believe that we cannot have 2 sets of rules. We have an example of a senior police officer, a man who rose to the highest ranks, who had 2 sets of double promotions for degrees. Also there is a rift that goes on in there where lawyers seemingly are accelerated at a faster rate than other people with tertiary education who are outside of the legal profession and that in itself is something that we need to address with regard to how we look at the police force.

I do not think that just having a law degree gives you more of a step up over somebody else who has a tertiary education even though it may be a specialised area. The concept of policing cannot only be based simply in a legal framework. It must have a lot of other components that run parallel to it as well.

Sir, there are special cases in the force for double promotions and accelerated promotions for people with degrees but we need to streamline it. We need to have one set of rules for everyone that comes into the force and to have serious criteria for judging whether or not we can keep these people because in any job or any business constant turnover is not good at all for the people who are delivering the service.

Also I want to say that within the police force all of us agree that it is a thankless job.
12.45 p.m.

During the Thatcher years in England, Margaret Thatcher was very clear to use salary increases and she really looked after the police. Now, a lot of people may argue that was because she needed them to come on the picket lines and fight against the unions when she had the serious fights with the unions. But the point is this. During the time they looked at increasing their benefits and conditions of work the Police Force totally changed within Great Britain.

I believe, Sir, that in Barbados it is about time that we take policemen out of the salary scale of the civil service. Policemen and policewomen are special people. When the hurricanes come all of us head to our homes but

the police have to head out to wherever they are going. Some people may argue they knew those were the conditions when they got into it but I am saying at the same time when the majority of citizens are heading home these people are heading out. But these people are outdoors too.

Aside.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Sir, I also want to say this. Police by the Constitution cannot associate, and they are not members of unions. Even the nurses have their own association where they can dictate how many nights and weeks they can work and all that kind of thing. We know that for a fact but the police do not have that. Therefore, it is necessary to treat them specially.

Sir, I know Senator Thompson may talk a lot about the dangerous jobs they do and the special insurance. I also want to say, because I am not even going to deal with the dangers because we all know about the dangers and we all know that they need special insurance. What is clear is this. The job is also a very stressful job. I would like a lot of people to know that within the Police Force in Barbados there is a high incidence of divorce rates. There is a high rate of very serious strained relationships and I believe that it is about time that a caring Government, any Government, looks at reducing the time that a policeman must spend in the Police Force to be able to get maximum benefits.

I do not believe that in a stressful job like policing that you need to spend 33½ years. I believe it is about time that we look at reducing the time from the 33½ years to say in the region of 25 years. I believe that in any job like that you need to look at reducing the amount.

I want to say, Sir, that I do not even know who determines the level of policemen we need in Barbados. I agree with Senator Mascoll. The only way in which you can determine how many policemen you need in Barbados is by some sound and solid research. Every year in Barbados between the months of January and March about 50 000 to 60 000 tourists come to this island from all over the world.

Aside.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: They come from Brazil too. As a matter of fact, 1 000 came from Brazil. Up to now we have not determined the levels of policemen we need to be able to deal with people even at those long times. There are 220 extra Special Constables. I am not so sure that we have ever determined the correct levels of policing that we need in Barbados. It must be an ongoing thing that we must constantly study. We need to strengthen the institution of research even within the Police Force

to be able to determine on a constant basis how many people we really need to be able to deal with crime.

I also need to say that I do not know who determines what the numbers are but there must be a call for more serious community policing and proactive policing in Barbados. This thing about hanging 17-year olds will not solve the problem. I am saying that we must determine in a serious and sensible way that we need more police to deal with the people in the community. Police which have been set up in some communities have done well.

In other jurisdictions there is the Police Athletic League, for example, around the Caribbean and in North America. These Police Athletic Leagues have been working very closely with people within communities. I believe the police still have a lot of credibility within the society and therefore what we need to do is to be able to integrate them more than regular citizens at the community level because people believe that paying taxes is all. Paying taxes cannot be all. The role of citizens within those communities must be to link with police officers and there is more than just reporting crime and paying taxes. That is not enough.

Sir, the other interesting point and the point I must make is this. I want to make a call for a tourism police task force. We have said this on more than one occasion. I do not believe that the average policeman coming out on the street is trained to deal with people of different nationalities, is trained to deal with people of different colours and creeds. I believe what we need to do is to create a small task force, and I am very serious about this, within the Police Force that are more applicable that can deal with tourists on that level.

I believe even in terms of the uniforms the police wear I do not know if anybody ever tried to run in boots on any sand, but I cannot see a fellow running in boots on the sand. If anybody has ever gone to the beaches and looked around and seen them standing on the beach every day in the sun and the hats on their heads, and they have on these long pants and these boots, you cannot run in boots on sand. You cannot even run on sand barefooted properly furthermore in boots. We have created a situation where we need a Police Task Force.

Sir, I have been to Orlando, Florida and I have seen the Police Task Force. We are not reinventing the wheel. They come out in cycle pants. They come out on mountain bikes. They wear helmets and tee shirts, cycle pants and a soft shoe. When a fellow leaves to move in the tourist belt, he can move but you cannot expect to send a fellow on a beach in a long pants and a pair of boots and tell a fellow to chase down a vagrant, or a fellow that is harassing anybody.

The ones we have, also need to be trained. Look at the vehicles for the beaches. It is about time we created one of these motorcycles for the beaches. They are used in other jurisdictions so that the police have the correct tools to deal with on the beaches. Then they need language training as well. There is no way you can run a proper tourism destination and not have a Special Force within the wider Force to deal specially with tourism.

Sir, I want to say one other thing that I believe we need to create some form of tax incentive to tap the private sector so that we get more funding, especially for those policemen within the tourist belt, so that they can help in the financing of this Tourism Task Force.

Sir, on those words I want to give my support to the Attorney General and to a party that continues to care and a Government that continues to promise and perform. I thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today.

The question that the sitting do now suspend until 2.00 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to. Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the sitting accordingly. 12.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy President, I would like to make a few brief comments on this Bill before this Honourable Chamber today.

I would first like to express very special thanks to those Barbadians who decided to join with the Members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, I am making reference to the Special Constable, and providing for us a very valuable service at a time when we really needed it. I am sure you can recall that at that time we were having a number of problems on the streets, within the homes and we needed to get the police force active in their regular areas of policing and then we needed assistance in those other areas which did not call for the greater skills in policing and hence the Special Constables came on board at that time and played a very, very important part and I would like at this time to recognise them and to thank them for that contribution.

I, like other Senators, believe that policing involves a lot of risk. I believe that policing calls also for a very special type of person. A lot of discussion has taken place about the basic requirements for entry into the Police

Force and whether we should concentrate on academic qualification, three Basic or General CXC subjects. I believe that the first thing we need to look for in our attempt to draft individuals into the Police Force is a certain spirit. Policing calls for a certain sense of commitment, dedication, service above self, caring, love for fellowman, love for country and I do not believe that if we restrict or if we spend so much time on looking at basic academic requirements that we would necessarily attract the best and the right persons to the Barbados Police Force. That is not to say that I believe we should just walk around and scrape up people and put them in the Force but I think we ought, at this time in particular, to look for individuals who possess those special skills.

I have very close relationship with a number of individual members of the Barbados Police Force and I can say today without any fear of contradiction that there is general disillusionment and I would say morale is low in the Police Force at this time. There are several factors contributing to this but I will attempt to identify at least two of them. One of the problems we have in the Police Force today is associated with those persons who have joined the Force and who have Degrees, be it law or other special areas. There is this feeling in the Police Force that those individuals who are really into policing, those people who are on the beat, those people who are on the streets sometimes for 20 and 22 hours a day, that they are not receiving their entitlement in the Force and all that is necessary now, in order to move ahead and earn a certain salary in the Police Force and be recognised, is to get a University Degree in Law, Sociology or some other area. I think that is something we need to look at very carefully. We can attract professionals to the Force but not professional policemen and I believe that in our attempt to reward police or to give them their credit, their recognition, their due, we need to look carefully at policing.

Now I have my own view on what policing is and maybe my view does not coincide with that of those persons responsible for the management of the Force but for me policing is about being out there looking after those people who when they are in their homes at night want to feel that the State is responsible for their security. Policing is about my ability to walk the streets of Bridgetown in a fairly comfortable and secure way knowing that if someone who has no care or regard for the law is attempting to molest, harass or whatever, that there is someone there to whom I can turn for assistance.

Sir, although there are things that can be done behind the scenes by those specialists in criminology and other areas in the police force I believe that the policeman, the real policeman, is that individual who is out there interfacing and interacting with the problems and the concerns of the citizens of Barbados and I think we need

to recognise our police constables more. I am making a special appeal for very special recognition for the Constables in the Royal Barbados Police Force.

In recent times I have been observing very closely the work which these officers have been doing in the communities. That area is of very special concern to me because for the first time I have seen the policeman as a caring individual. I say caring because we have associated them with force and with arrest and locking up and as some people would say sometimes, beating. But I have seen a special kind of caring disposition coming out of our police constables in recent times, especially the resident beat officer. I watch these young men – I have not seen women but I have been told there are women – as they walk through my neighbourhood. I observe how they stop and they speak with the families, how they mix with the youngsters. I have even heard them discuss playing football and tennis and other sports with the youngsters in the neighbourhood. And what are they attempting to do? They are attempting to break down all these barriers which have been there in the past between themselves and the citizens and trying to make the citizen feel more comfortable, more relaxed as he communicates with the police. I think this is a very important area in our community policing. I think it is something that we ought to encourage and give our support to it.

I think also I would like to recognise their attempts at crime prevention. Over the years we have seen policemen as people we call in when we have trouble. When a house is broken into we call the police. But the police, as I am observing, in recent times, they are now attempting to deal with things which can become problems and which can be crimes at a later date, by focussing on crime prevention and I have been very impressed by their attempts to keep those children who are tempted to be truants by making sure that when they see them on the streets and in the bus stands after school hours that they go to their schools. They also make sure that the parents are aware that these children have been hanging around the bus stands and the street corners beyond school time. I think this is a very good job which our police have been doing in recent times. I do not think many of us recognise that they have really been doing this kind of work in the community. If they can help these youngsters to recognise the importance of remaining in school, I have no doubt that by this act they can prevent these youngsters from becoming criminals at a later date, maybe just by sharing that they have a concern about their well-being and about their future.

So I wanted to make these few brief comments. Another area that concerns me a bit. I have noticed in recent times that as soon as a member of the Royal Barbados Police Force retires he dies within 2 years.
2.10 p.m.

I have noticed that. They do not seem to get an opportunity to enjoy their retirement and it is saying to me that these individuals, having been exposed to such long hours of work, have worked their systems down not to perform and down to the point that they cannot enjoy the kind of retirement that Senator Symmonds is enjoying today where she is active years after in many organizations and does not even look her age as Senator Rickinson is saying.

I believe that we need to look at the age of retirement of the police. I do not believe that you can necessarily be an effective policeman at age 60. So I would like the Government to pay very special attention to the age of retirement for policemen. I believe that you cannot necessarily have an active policeman at age 60 if policing is really about getting out there and helping to prevent crime and if there is crime helping to deal with it. I do not see many people who are 60 years who can chase after criminals and do not do all of these things. It means therefore that these individuals will have to be at a certain level in the Police Force in which they are not necessarily mobile just administrators. So how many administrators can you have in a small Police Force in a small country like Barbados or how many administrators can you afford to have at any one time in the Police Force. I believe that when the police reach a certain age they should be able to move on in order that we can recruit younger people into the Force and they should be able to enjoy some years of retirement.

I would also like to see police, nurses, teachers, fire officers and prison officers placed in special categories in the Public Service. I have already heard that they are in a special category but I believe that these individuals perform tasks which call for them to work much longer hours than many other individuals in the public service such as teachers, nurses, fire officers and prison officers and particularly fire officers, police and prison officers are exposed to many other risks and greater risks than the ordinary citizen of Barbados. I believe we ought to compensate them in accordance with the level of risks to which they are exposed and I want to make that special plea.

Certain remarks made by SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON were asked to be expunged from the record by Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: I would like to see the day, Sir, when the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force as citizens of Barbados can express certain concerns in areas which affect them directly. I would like, Sir, for the day to come when we have the necessary Constitutional amendment which will allow for this to happen. I recognize that they are in a very special area and as such the state has to make sure for security purposes

that they conduct themselves in a particular way. But I believe that there are certain rights and privileges which all Barbadians should have regardless of whatever area they are working in there are certain rights and privileges which are necessary. I call on the Government and the Constitutional Review Committee to look into that area of our Constitution which presents members of the Police Force from exercising certain rights and privileges granted to other Barbadians.

Before I sit, I would like to make a very special appeal to parents in Barbados. Today we discussed recruiting members for the Royal Barbados Police Force and we talked about looking for people of character. But I think that we have to recognize that the police who we are seeking to attract are coming from the society. They are products of their society and we have to accept that we have a society that has gone through such change that some of us cannot even recognize it and that we will never be able to attract the type of policeman that we have had in the past unless we set out to change our society. We cannot change our society unless we set out to bring about changes in our home. Unless we try to make sure that we give to this nation the kinds of persons who can serve at all levels, then you should have no difficulty in making a choice from among these young people as they come out in the wider society and the onus therefore is on us as parents of Barbados who need the service and the security of the Royal Barbados Police Force to make sure that we give to this country of ours Barbados the right kinds of sons and daughters who can be the right types of persons for our Police Force. That is something we need to embark upon. For unless we do so, we will be making the job extremely difficult of the Commissioner of Police, the Chief Fire Officer and all of these individuals who seek to attract good citizens.

On those few remarks, Sir, I have no difficulty in supporting this Bill. Thank you.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I wish to lend my support to the Police Act and, even though the Honourable Senator Mascoll made mention of the comments in the White Paper, I think that it is important that he sees it in the light in which it is expressed to add 3 or more subjects. Approximately 30 per cent of the students gained 3 or more subjects at general proficiency level. It does not say, Sir, that a number of students will not gain perhaps two and I know, Sir, there are opportunities where individuals can continue through the Continuing Education Programmes in the various institutions set up for individuals to further their studies to be able to acquire more. There are individuals certainly in the teaching profession who started in the late 1960's and 1970's with one certificate because of the large number of teachers who went over to the Bahamas or any other country. With the opportunities which they have

gotten through the Continuing Education Programmes, they have been able to acquire the minimum 4 in order to enter teaching. Sir, I think that we should be fairly consistent in the light that thousands of Barbadians have been given the opportunity, some through free education and others having gotten the opportunity to pay at private institutions, to be able to further their education and to be able to acquire various subjects. I think that recognition must be given to...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Although the Honourable Member might be replying to what Senator Mascoll has said, I believe that she should still look at what is before the Chamber and that is the amendment to the Police Act.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Yes, Sir. I am coming there. Thank you for pointing me, Sir. I agree that the requirements for the Special Constables be at least the 3 certificates and I want to emphasize that at least one of them should be English language from the point of view that we need individuals in the Force who are articulate and who are intelligent. In the light of the sophistication in crime now, I would want us to have individuals who are resourceful and who could use their initiative.
2.20 p.m.

I want to commend the work of the Royal Barbados Police Force in their efforts in helping to combat crime in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy President, certainly there are a number of police officers who would have perhaps entered the Force with no qualifications along the line of CXC or GCE, but they have capitalised on the various opportunities through the various institutions to be able to upgrade their certification and some of them climbed higher in the Force. Some of them have pursued studies in criminology, some have become attorneys-at-law and it says that there is hope for other individuals in there to aspire to such heights.

Mr. Deputy President, I was happy about the changes that were made when they were removed from working in Immigration and at the Licensing Authority. We recognise that there are other roles they are expected to play in this society if we as Barbadians must become more aware of the role we should play in helping our country to advance. I know many institutions invite police officers to give educational talks in discussions, workshops, whatever, and it impacts heavily on the Royal Barbados Police Force when they have to be pulled out on a daily basis to give that necessary kind of training. I want to also commend them, because the message that they bring it is not good enough to listen to the call-in programmes only, or to the programme on Sunday mornings "Police on the Beat", but to sit in an audience with them and ask certain questions and to get education about drugs and how crime is

advancing. I think it is extremely important for us, the people in the communities, to be able to capitalise on such opportunities.

Mr. Deputy President, I finally want to make a recommendation, even though it might be slightly different, but in the light that we are looking at recruitment of individuals who have served as Special Constables, I agree that those who are in and have the training as Island Constables, be recognised that if they do not have the necessary three, at least I know the testing that will take place that will afford them the opportunity to be able to continue and I commend that. I also want to recommend that the police officers be given training in psychology and, human resources development, because police officers are human beings too. They do have home problems, they are all stressed out, and I think that kind of input where they have someone they can talk to, there is someone they can thrash out various problems with, it helps them to boost their morale and to make them feel that they are important too. The listening ear, I think, in this particular situation, will help them to improve their lot.

And so, with those few comments, Sir, I would want to lend my support to this particular amendment and to commend the Attorney General's Office for this particular step in our advancement in 1996.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I rise in conclusion of this Second Reading of this Bill to amend the Police Act. I must note and make comment on one or two points that have been raised.

The matter of the terms and conditions of police officers has been raised and in particular it was suggested that there was no cover or compensation available to persons who had been injured in the line of duty. I am sure you will know, Mr. Deputy President, that although there is at present not yet in place an overall medical insurance plan, for example, that officers who are injured in the line of duty have been over the years regularly and routinely compensated by means of *ex gratia* payments by the Crown. So that to suggest that policemen are totally without assistance with respect to any suffering that is incurred in the line of duty is not necessarily entirely accurate and I would want that to be quite clear.

Also, Sir, I want to make a few comments on the matter of the level of qualification one would need to enter the Force and the level of availability of persons who would be able to serve the Force. The gravamen of the contribution of the first spokesman for the Opposition was that the raising of the qualifications was not well thought through and that based on careful study and analysis of available figures there would only be some very limited number of persons – and the figure of 120 was quoted, Sir – in the whole of Barbados who would be eligible and available, which represented some 30% of the

school leaving population, who would have attained the basic qualifications necessary for entry. Even before that presentation was concluded, Sir, the facts of the matter were revealed which indicated that in spite of the self-proclaimed careful and detailed analysis of readily available information, to borrow from the word, that in fact the figure of the pool of persons with three or more CXC's is really in the region of 1200 and that his suggestion that by making this amendment we would in fact be relegating the Police Force to a position where it would take 15 years at the current rate of retirement to even replace those retirees, is obviously and clearly way off the mark.

We can, therefore, in considering this matter of raising the qualifications for the Force ignore that presentation, because given that the gravamen of the presentation was that there was no careful analysis on the part of the Government and that the Honourable Senator in using the Government's figures, as he saw them, was so far off the mark, I believe we can discount that portion of the presentation. It only goes to show that this measure has indeed been carefully thought through and that it attempts, as I suggested in my initial presentation, to raise the level of the intake. But I take the point that has been made in more sober presentations, that is, that academic qualifications alone are not the only important criteria.

We also must consider, Sir, that we cannot be unmindful of the general improvement in the base of academic qualifications and that from generation to generation and era to era what becomes the acceptable standard and the acceptable norm will change. Also, in drafting the amendment, it was well recognised that there needed to be a device available to allow for the consideration of characteristics, qualifications, skills and abilities which are not necessarily captured in the two identified areas of academic qualifications, namely, the CXC General Proficiency and the GCE Ordinary Level. The amendment speaks to an examination that can be done to establish the proficiency of the individual, and if I can just quote that section for you, Sir, it says:

"In an examination equivalent to those referred to in subparagraphs (1) and (2)..."

and in fact that concept and that phrasing is really not too far removed from the phrasing in the Police Act, 1961 where it spoke to an examination, if I can just locate the portion of the Act, by the Director of Education. 2.30 p.m.

In other words, the Act being a 1961 Act, prior to Independence, spoke to the structures and procedures that would have been in use at that time. It says here for example that:

"No one being able to enlist who fails to pass an examination to be held by the Director of Education..."

They recognise, for example, the School Certificate examination or the Junior Cambridge Examination or corresponding examination. It even mentions that you could not be a member of the Force unless you were a British subject so that in the absence of Junior Cambridge Examinations these days and School Certificate Examination and Director of Education the formal qualifications recognised obviously speak to those major ones that are in use today and it also retains that provision whereby as an alternative an examination could be done and the person could be tested by competent authorities to ensure that they are of the standard which one would expect in a modern police force.

In fact, one would recall that very often the call is made for police officers investigating crimes to make use of modern techniques and to use scientific principles to aid in the solution of these crimes and if we are to be able to move in that direction we obviously need persons who will benefit from such training.

With those few general comments, I beg to move that this Bill to amend the Police Act be now read a second time.

The question was put and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY, Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, SENATOR Miss O. P. SYMMONDS in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 3 were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY, Madam Chairman reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO ACQUIRE LAND
AT DEACONS ROAD, ST. MICHAEL

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, the Resolution before the Honourable Senate

seeks its approval for acquisition of land at Headley Road, Deacons Road, St. Michael for the purpose of road improvement. This matter has a very long history. In fact, Sir, the road is very well completed and by now probably due for repairs.

This dates back to a tenantry road project several years ago and the land forms part of a parcel owned by Mrs. Edna Johnson. The claim was made by the attorneys acting on behalf of Mrs. Johnson back in 1988 concerning a portion of some 23.42 square metres of land that was utilised for road improvement. The difficulties arose however concerning the question of ownership of the land because there had been an investigation revealing that the owner was indeed part of an estate belonging to a deceased person and there was some lack of information in some of the records that passed.

Sir, the uncertainty of the ownership created some difficulties there, but also the procedures as have been employed in some of these cases have been less than speedy. The result is that the road was part of a tenantry road programme and the road is very much in place and this is not by any means a new project; but in order for compensation to be paid to the landowner it is necessary for Government to complete the formal acquisition process, obtain clear title and thereby be in a position to pay compensation to the owner.

It is for this reason that this matter comes before the Honourable Senate to seek formal approval for this 23.42 square metres of land at Headleys Road, Deacons Road which was used for road improvement. The Crown is seeking to get clear title to the land and thereby be in a position to pay compensation to the owner, Mrs. Edna Johnson.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

**ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT
LODGE ROAD, CHRIST CHURCH
FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT**

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, approval is being sought for the acquisition of land at Kings Court, Lodge Road in Christ Church for the purposes of road improvement. This land in question relates to road improvement which was conducted in the area of the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Lodge Road. The road in

question once called Chase Road is now known as Kings Court.
2.40 p.m.

The area in question consisted of an existing tenantry on which road improvement was done. As a result of those improvements some property belonging to Mrs. Daphney Greenidge was used in the construction of the roads. The property in question consists of two parcels of land, one measuring 376.4 square metres and another measuring some 597.3 square metres.

Again, Sir, the Crown is seeking to have title to the land in order to facilitate payment of compensation to the owner of the land. This is not a new project. The road is very much in place. I drove on it up to yesterday. The formal procedure is needed to be completed in order for compensation to be paid to the owner of the land at Chase Road, now renamed King's Court at Lodge Road in Christ Church.

I beg to move, Sir, that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR N. P. WELCH: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Resolution but I first want to compliment the Ministry of Transport and Works for the wonderful job they have been doing over the last few years in the general improvement to roads in Barbados. We have seen a number of highways constructed over the last couple of years. We have seen a very impressive programme for road improvement in the Appropriation Bill.

I want to make mention of this particular area because it is an area that I am reasonably familiar with. There is a general problem in Lodge Road and surrounding areas in the area of road safety. I am happy that the Government took the initiative in another area, at Codrington Hill only a couple months ago when, in addition to widening what was a dangerous junction, took the bold initiative to not only include traffic lights but also to introduce a new audio system for the visual impaired which, obviously, would improve their ability to cross the roads at that junction safely.

My understanding is that a similar project would be implemented at the Pine junction where a similar audio system would be installed. My concern in this particular area stems from the fact that around the Lodge Road/Water Street/Wotton area there are at least three schools, the two Christ Church Schools, Christ Church Boys' and Girls' Schools and the Foundation School. Also, in the Lodge Road/Newton area quite a few people trek there daily in the industrial estates to earn their living.

The whole stretch from Newton/Lodge Road area down to Oistins, the stretch from the Deighton Griffith

School passing through Wotton, Kingsland going up by the two primary schools has one serious road safety problem. They have no sidewalks. I think the time has come now when the Government must address this situation really seriously because it is an area in Christ Church which has a very high density of pedestrian traffic. I believe there are over 1 000 children at the Foundation School, perhaps the same amount at Deighton Griffith, thousands in industries at Newton and the initiative must be taken by Government to provide the funds to improve sidewalks so that the safety and health interest of those people who need to use those roads on a daily basis is safeguarded.

Mr. Deputy President, while talking about road safety, I want to draw the attention of Government to a situation which I know was just an oversight. I know the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Works took another bold initiative in erecting pedestrian crossings in the vicinity of the secondary, primary and all schools in Barbados.

An oversight exists in the area of St. Matthias on Highway 7 where a significant majority of the children who go to St. Matthias School exit the bus on that Highway to walk across St. Matthias by the Church to get into school. Although provision is made in the area of the school for people to cross the road, there is no provision on that busy Highway, Highway 7, for a pedestrian crossing.

Only last term, unfortunately, a young girl from St. Matthias School got knocked over there. I want to draw it to Government's attention that there is urgent need for a pedestrian crossing in that area to facilitate the children getting to both sides of the road. As a fellow Senator in an aside said, and I think when this is done we need too to have a traffic warden placed there because we know that on some roads there are some vehicle drivers who are very inconsiderate.

The last point I want to draw to the Government's attention relates to a situation of a fairly heavy vehicular and pedestrian traffic in Oistins on weekends with the activities going on up there. It is becoming extremely difficult for people to get from one side of the road to the next. Although there are pedestrian crossings in the area at the present time the concentration of the commercial activity at night calls for the urgent provision of more pedestrian crossings.

With these few brief comments, Mr. Deputy President, I give this Resolution my wholehearted support.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
PAYMENT OF AN INCREASED COST-OF-
LIVING ALLOWANCE AT THE RATE OF
2.5% PER ANNUM TO GOVERNMENT
PENSIONERS WITH EFFECT FROM
APRIL 1, 1995 SUBJECT TO
THE CONDITIONS SET OUT
IN THE SCHEDULE HERETO

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, the matter before the Honourable Senate is the proposed increase to Government pensioners to take effect from April 1, 1995. This matter is consequential upon the increases granted to the present Government employees and it is usual at the time of the adjustment to the present employees of Government to also make an adjustment to the pensions of former Government pensioners. This usually comes in the form of adjustments in an allowance given that the statutory rate of the basic pension in many cases cannot exceed half the rate of the last salary in office. You will see mention in the Resolution, Sir, of a cost-of-living allowance. The proposal, therefore, is to increase the cost-of-living allowance by 2.5 per cent.

In addition, on top of the 2.5 per cent an additional adjustment is being proposed for Government pensioners as former employees of the Government who would have retired prior to April 1, 1976 and that proposed amount on top of the 2.5 per cent is an additional \$5.

Also, Sir, the 2.5 per cent adjustment increase to the cost of living allowance is subject to a minimum cap of \$20. In the case where 2.5 per cent would be less than \$20 for that particular category of person, the increase there would be raised to \$20.
2.50 p.m.

This, Sir, as I said, is consequential on the adjustments that have been made and the increases that have been granted to the current employees and is part of the usual procedures to ensure that former workers of the Crown are also considered at the time when the increases are granted to present employees of the Government. I beg to move, Sir, that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR Mrs. V. J. DAVIS: Mr. Deputy President, in speaking on this Resolution to improve the payment with effect from 1st April, 1995 of an increase of cost of living allowance at the rate of 2.5% per annum to Government pensioners and an additional \$5 per month for those pensioners who retired prior to 1st April, 1976. I would like first to make the point that retired pensioners of the Government have been people who have worked and built this nation and have worked for very little money over the years. These are people who have paid their taxes, they have paid union dues, they have tried to support themselves by having insurance. These are people who are not

sitting waiting for handouts from anybody. These are people who have been trying to live in dignity and when I consider what the same products of these Government retired pensioners are now getting as salaries and I consider, particularly the plight of those pensioners who retired before 1976, it is alarming to think that most of them are trying to live on \$400.00 a month, so that when I see this Resolution is saying that 2.5% or \$5.00, I frankly consider it a sort of insult. I cannot use anything stronger than that. It is a kind of insult to people who have worked and toiled and built this country, who were the real nation builders, and I am saying this, those whose salaries were always paltry, who have always paid their taxes. I have to repeat this. These Government pensioners were never able to escape paying taxes. They paid their dues and then for this to come before me saying that they get 2.5%. Do you know what is 2.5% of \$400.00? It is \$10.00, and then you add \$5.00 to make \$15.00.

I think the young people coming up are going to lose respect for us, not only as people who make laws but they are going to lose respect for the very people who helped to build this country. They are going to say, do you mean to tell me that these people are getting \$15.00 per month? Primary school children are now getting that as pocket money. I would think that a caring Government, as I hear it said, time and time again, a caring Government would first consider not 2.5% as fine for people who have worked from 1976 but to write off right away the pension that these people are getting, they have to live in the same world that the young people who are now coming up who are working for four, five and six-figure salaries have to live. They have to go to the same supermarkets and the terrible thing is that even when through thrift and hard work, these dear old people have saved and invested, they are still going to pay taxes on that. When I look at the land tax, when I look at the water rates, it is not these people who owe millions of dollars for water. It is not these people who owe millions of dollars in land taxes and to me this is holding people up to public ridicule. When I saw this thing, I said, "My God, people who have worked so hard, people who tried to live in dignity and now this is put out here for people to laugh at them".

Mr. Deputy President, it is not a question of overstating the case. These people have even, as I said, paid health insurance. I am one of those persons who started paying health insurance and then for people to tell you at age 65 that you are no longer covered. These are not people who are begging for charity. These are people who have done everything that the laws of the country said they should do. They have done everything that thrift and decency and pride and dignity have asked them to do and today we are going to see that 2.5% plus \$5.00 per month. I think this is disgraceful. I am prepared to accept that this might be the beginning of some more reasonable approach to pensioners.

I am also going to state that I think a more reasonable approach to retired Government pensioners should be that they should be given regular cost of living allowances. As the cost of living goes up they should be given a cost of living allowance. That is not something too terrible to ask of any Government. So who is to pay for it? I know who is to pay for it. You see it is all right to ask now who is to pay for it but what I am saying is, this country was built on people who worked for very little money. Let those who are now working for a lot of money pay for it. This country was built on those people who worked for next to nothing.

Mr. Deputy President, all I am expressing here is my disappointment and sadness that the people who built this nation are not only going to be given very little but are being held up for public ridicule by this so-called Resolution that we are going to pass in this House. Thank you.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, all of us in here wish that more could be done for our senior citizens and will in the near future ensure that our pensioners live in dignity, quite different from the other Party who, over the years, did not seek to improve the lot of the pensioners. Sir, we are discussing a Resolution where this Government is seeking to improve the lot of those who worked hard for the building up of this country. Sir, it is nothing to get emotional about. The Government spends about \$70 million a year on retirement benefits for its workers. The figure for this year is \$68.9 million. That is the figure that is in the Estimates for retiring benefits for public workers.

Sir, we wish we could double the pensions but look at the enormous costs. Sir, it is a problem that we have to look at as a country. Sir, I was looking at the figures which were published in the Annual Report last year, the one from 1994 which was laid in this Honourable Chamber last year and it shows that whereas in 1970, 11.7% of the population was 60 years or above, that figure has increased to 15.3% in 1990. You have to recognise that our population is aging. The profile has changed and a tremendous pressure is put on the public resources as we come to deal with the issue of pensions for our senior citizens. It is not a matter to become emotional about. It is a serious matter which has implications for Government expenditure as well as the National Insurance Scheme. Sir, it is not known but the non-contributory old age pensioners cost Government \$50 million a year so we are talking about a lot of money. Sir, I also wish to say that this does not include the contributory national insurance pension. Sir, the point I am making is that our senior citizens have contributed much in their years but in their retirement years we have to make adequate provision for their security and it is something that this Government is looking seriously at. 3.00 p.m.

Sir, I hope that in a short time we come up with a plan for dealing with our senior citizens. It is as critical as that. It is a very critical area and one in which the whole society has to deal with. Sir, but what about those people who are not Government employees? A lot of them have worked for years and the only thing they have to depend on is either the National Insurance Pension and those who are very old would not have been working in the time of the National Insurance. A lot of them have to depend on the Old Age Pension. So at least the Government looks after its pensioners to a certain extent. But those who worked in the private sector a lot of them are sucking salt in their old days. The matter is not only a Government matter. It is a matter for the society as a whole and added to that, Sir, old age itself brings on added expenditure because the older you get the more you have to spend in medical and other services.

Sir, it is a very serious issue and, as I said, it is not one to get emotional about. It is one that we must address as a nation and to talk about an insult is over-stating the case. Because nobody will get \$10 a month contrary to what the last Senator said because the minimum that anyone will get is \$20.00 a month and those who retired prior to 1976 will get a little bit more.

Sir, we have to find a way where those workers especially in the private sector get pension schemes more readily available to ensure that those workers when they reach a retirement age at least will have a little bit more to fall back on than just the National Insurance Pension, which I think the minimum is about \$80.00 or somewhere in that region. So do not forget, Sir, that the Government also seeks to look after persons in a certain way by allowing those who are in need certain provisions regarding their light and water and so on. If pension is the only means of support and of course if the pension is not large, they will have relief when it comes to land tax. There is a special Land Tax Relief Board who looks after people who are in need with regards to their land tax. So there are certain supports that are already in place to ease the lot a little bit of our senior citizens.

Sir, I would not want it spread abroad that we in this Government are insulting or ill-treating those people who have made sterling contributions to this country when they were in their younger days. We recognize that we have a moral responsibility to ensure that our senior citizens live if not in comfort but with some sort of dignity. It is a moral duty, Sir, and we take our duties very carefully. I felt a little bit hurt when the last Senator could think that we are insulting our old age pensioners.

Sir, as I said before, we are looking at this problem in a very serious way because it is a very serious problem. Sir, we have almost 40 000 persons in Barbados who are

60 years or over. It is a massive problem and I can assure this Senate that this Government right now is working on the problem. But, Sir, do not expect instant solutions to what is a complex problem. But I can assure you that we are looking at the problem because we recognize that we cannot be a caring society if we do not ensure that those who have contributed to make our island great, that in their latter days when they should be enjoying the fruits of their labour have to worry about how they are going to pay their telephone bill. In this regard, we are trying to build our health services so that our old people can go to the polyclinics in comfort knowing that they will get the best medical attention that there is. All of that is important to our senior citizens. That is very important to them because they want to know that when they get 80 years and something goes wrong with them that they are not with mountainous medical bills but that the state is looking after them. Sir, I recognize that this Government of which I am a part wish that we could do more for the pensioners at this point in time. But at this point we spend about \$70 million a year on pensions and gratuities and it is not easy to double that. Because as we all will appreciate these are serious implications for our national budget but, Sir, the Government is looking at it. Sir, from the last 18 months, even the most die-hard opponent would admit that this Government is seeking to make wrong things right. This, Sir, is another area where we recognize at present that we cannot do better but at the same time this is not the end of the matter. They will get a little ease and then we have a comprehensive plan on how to deal with this important section of Barbados where 40 000 of our people are 60 years and above and that is a large constituency so to speak. A lot of us here are in that category and I recognize that they have a special interest to protect. Sir, with God's help, I probably will get there too. So it is a matter of self-interest.

Sir, the question of indexing pensions and linking it to the cost of living is an important consideration which has to be taken seriously, the whole question of relating pensions to the cost of living. Sir, as you would appreciate, that also has cost implications. We take credit on this side that this is the first time since 1990 that pensions have increased and we are glad that this Government on this side are the ones who put in place measures such as these to give our senior citizens a little bit of ease. Sir, with gladness in my heart, I support this Resolution knowing that it is but the first start in the process of ensuring our senior citizens to spend the last of their years in comfort and in dignity. Sir, remember that you were part of the Government in 1976. We found when we came into Government in 1976 that our old age pensioners had a means test that if you had somebody living at you and the inspector came around you had to hide the person. People were peeping around to see who lived at you. If they found that someone was living at you, they would take away the few cents you were getting. When we came in if

you reached 65 years no matter who you were, the person must get a pension of some sort. The Government of which I am a part between 1976 and 1986 were the ones who improved the lot of this country. The means test was done away with, Sir.

3.10 p.m.

Not only that. Sir, when I was a boy, as all of us knows, on Thursday mornings in Country Road you saw a lot of people there waiting for the few dollars, but what happens now? They stay home and the cheque comes to their house. I am talking about dignity. That is very important, because in the old days they were made to look as if they were beggars. Now that the cheque comes home they can take it to the shop or supermarket and it is honoured, which makes them feel as though they are somebody. So when I hear that we are insulting people, it goes against our history. It goes against what we have done for our senior citizens in this country, and I will not take it, Sir. It flies in the face of evidence. We are the party that was responsible for improving the lot and dignity of our senior citizens and I take pride in being part of that. Pensions is not an issue to be politicised, it goes beyond politics, but I have to defend my party because the charge is a very serious charge, that we are insulting the senior citizens of Barbados. That is a very serious charge, because I would be insulting my mother and my uncle and I would hate to bite the hand that fed me, so I will not be party to anything which is insulting or degrading or demeaning to the senior people of Barbados.

I repeat, Sir, that this is but the first step in the process of revolutionising the delivery of benefits to our senior citizens and Government must be complimented, not ridiculed, in seeking to improve the lot of pensioners who since 1990 have not had an increase, and when we seek to increase the pensions we hear about insulting and all of that.

With those few words, Sir, I want to commend this Resolution to the Chamber and ask that they support it wholeheartedly.

Thank you.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: Mr. Deputy President, Senator Barker has said that this matter is not an emotional one. I beg to differ. If emotion is about the heart and about love and we care for and feel anything about these people we are making the decision to that effect, then the matter has to be seen as an emotional one. I would want to view it in that way.

I was also concerned in his almost aside reference to the related welfare arrangements that should go with this decision we are being asked to take, the 2.5% increase. I

refer more specially to the Home Help Service and also to the reference to the utilities. I would like to see Government at this time visiting a whole package, not just coming up with this increase and saying we also have that there and the other thing there, but seeing what has got to be done.

Aside.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: One big step rather than one tiny one. You know, Sir, I am sure that these other facilities are not working properly, they are not being operated properly, and I will say why in a moment. Before I do that, let me say that I support the views of Senator Davis about the need for a better arrangement where the financial aspect of pension is concerned.

When the Home Help Service was set up, it was set up in order to erase the last semblance of institutionalism which was related to almshouse care that we all know about so well. It was a good idea, no matter what source it came from. I am not concerned with who started it, but the fact is that it was introduced and it was accepted as a wise way forward to help the shut-ins and particularly the senior pensioners and also the physically disabled ones who needed the kind of care. It started out as a thing welcomed and at first it seemed as though it would work, but as time went along it seemed to me that there was not the same energy, the same commitment, the home helpers did not always turn up and nobody knew what days for sure or whether certain people would be visited, and the whole thing fell into a state of disarray. I think that still has to be put right now. To simply say that somebody started it and others changed it and it is not working is not enough for me, because I see this as part of the whole emotional issue, that if we care about the aged, if we care about our pensioners, then we have to go the full way and not pretend or find excuses for not going. I think we have to revisit the home care arrangement as part of this other one.

Aside.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: I am going to talk till I am finished, Sir, I don't care who wants me to stop. I am going to talk my talk, as I am entitled until you stop me, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have not interrupted the Honourable Senator.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: Sir, thank you very much, and until you do that I will continue.

The other aspect of this package deal which I think should be considered today as part of the whole thing is

the reference to the payment of utilities for pensioners. I happen to know, as one who works directly with these pensioners, that many of them had the threat of their water and light being turned off and it was as though they were not remembered from time to time. There has to be a system where there is not that kind of a threat. There cannot be that kind of a threat. There has to be a system where they are allowed to feel comfortable in their homes with the knowledge that the monies for the payment will be provided ahead of time so that the anxieties one could experience at that age will not have to be realised.

3.20 p.m.

We know that where the matter of electricity is concerned a lot of these people use electricity to get a light in their houses and we know too that that is a source of safety for them because when they do not have electricity they have got to burn lamps, light lamps or lanterns or whatever. That is a danger for the elderly who are living alone. The matter has to be an emotional one if we are going to tackle it and not simply wait until things level out in one way or the other.

It is of utmost importance that this be given consideration in what I believe to be the package deal for the senior citizens and pensioners. I would like to end by just making a general appeal, hoping that somehow or another it would reach the people in the neighbourhoods as well as people in the churches. Maybe we even need to take the message ourselves and not just give Government a message. I think it concerns all of us.

There is a falling off of interest among people in neighbourhoods where the kind of help that used to be realised in earlier days was concerned. Sometimes the elderly are there if there is no home help – granted home care service cannot operate every hour of the day – they have to rely on people, family members, and some who have no family rely on neighbours. It is not unknown that some of these elderly people have got to wait for hours and hours to get somebody to run an errand, to buy a coke or some drink or some sugar or flour or whatever.

I would like to suggest, in fact, to invite the entire society to revisit this and to see it as a duty for all of us, not just the Government's responsibility, to give whatever help we can in the neighbourhoods in which we live. I am not going to leave out the churches I think that the churches have a part to play and I would like to see Government and the churches working together in all these efforts to make things somewhat better for these senior pensioners and the shut-ins whom we care for.

I will support as I always do those efforts that are designed to move us forward if only an inch forward but with the proviso that we are not to stop there. We have to

keep on keeping on. That is what I hope will happen in this regard. Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to acknowledge that efforts are being made to assist the elderly. However, I feel that given that the Honourable Senator Barker says that 40 000 people are pensioners, that is a lot of people. We have an aging population so therefore serious planning has to be done and has to be done urgently.

I will say up front that we need to index pensions after careful consideration of all categories of pensioners and that includes parliamentarians. I did see them mention here. You need to look at the different categories, the different types of pensions and what they are getting. It is okay to say that the pensions should be half the last wages but, in 1960, a PS was not getting any money and if he retires and his pension would only come to about \$300 and that person still has to try and live and pay taxes. I am not only talking about permanent secretaries. Some taxes come direct and others indirect, so we all as pensioners have to pay taxes. Even if it is not deducted out of the money, we do contribute to Inland Revenue.

We are aware that Government has a problem on its hands and I am aware that Government knows that it has a problem on its hands. It knows that down the road there will be more people on pensions than in the workforce. Now this has not only just been recognised. This was recognised way back in the 1980s when we were doing an excellent job in family planning to try and get the people to limit the amounts of children. We realised that we were telling them to have 1 or 2 children but down the road you are not going to have a workforce available to pay taxes, to pay the pensioners.

Mark you, Mr. Deputy President, we were not thinking of AIDS in those days and unfortunately, AIDS is ravishing our society, the people of working age, which means it is going to increase the enormity of the problem. So what do we do?

I think that we have to look at different areas to see where we can cut costs and one area is to keep people out of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I was trying to check how much it costs per day to maintain a patient in the Hospital, but I did not find it in time. I think it is something like \$130 or more. A lot of people in the Hospital are our elderly people who are long staying patients. We need to keep them out of the Hospital and in their homes.

I would like to suggest that part of the package that the Government is thinking about is to try and set up a vibrant local community involvement. There have been bits of legislation we have debated. There is the Drug Control legislation, the Rural Development legislation. We have

the polyclinics. All of these agencies need to be brought together in order to be involved in community organisation and community development. People have gotten away from organisations within their basic communities and we no longer seem to care for our neighbours. We will have to give them some sort of interest or try to stimulate them to start caring a bit more and work with the churches and all the agencies within the area.

Sometimes these pensions have to support a whole family. Sometimes they have to send children to school. They have to pay bus fares. They have to buy food and they have to go a long way. So really what is needed is an examination of how much a basic living wage would cost and look at areas in our society where we can cut the waste. We can cut the waste in many ways.

We talked about the home help etc. That could be part of the local organisation based at the polyclinic level, where we can have the social workers, the nurses, the home help etc. co-ordinated.
3.30 p.m.

We really should not have the people 70, 80 and 90 years old running up to polyclinics. We should have outreach programmes. We should have persons who are trained. It is not going to cost \$130 a day to pay these people. It is cheaper to keep them out of a bed in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and keep them in their homes and pay one member of the family to help look after them and you will see how much savings you can achieve.

In other words, Sir, I do not know how you are going to approach this but at some point in time soon you need to bring a lot of agencies together, workshops, I do not know how, and sit and look seriously at community development at the local level, not at the national level. We have to take decentralisation seriously.

There is no reason why the Home Help Service should have collapsed. The areas within which these people operate should be small. They should be operating from each polyclinic. They should be supervised. We should be able to have doctors who can visit the elderly once a month. We are turning out a lot of medical students. Some of them can do their internship in the community attached to the polyclinics. Do not forget that we have to pay these interns money every month and if they do not get it in time what happens? They are going on strike. The elderly cannot go on strike. We need to take our resources and make the best use of them possible. I do not think that is happening at the moment.

It was mentioned that maybe we need to have a pension scheme. I am in full support of that. I do not know how it would operate. I do not know if you would take it

from the person's basic wages or what but I think we need to have something.

Meals-on-Wheels – what we need to do is to give incentives to agencies like the Barbados Red Cross who provide such meals, the Salvation Army *et cetera*, who provide sometimes two or three meals per week for some of our shut-ins. I support the Archdeacon with the involvement with the Church but we have to get those people in the Church first. When I was small, whether I liked it or not I had to be in Church three times a day. Any young person I see wondering around I ask them why they are not in Church. We need to get them back in Church, whatever Church it is, because that is where you are taught a lot about caring for other persons. You are taught how to care and how to share. You are taught the good and you are taught the bad.

When you are looking at the pension scheme, I would like us to look at the whole package because, as we all know, a pension is a fixed income. If the cost of living goes up, it means the money does not stretch. If a pensioner has to worry that they might come and cut off the water, *et cetera*, the pensioner is going to get sick and where do they go? Right there in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because there is no other place to go. You cannot go anywhere else. The only place you can get help if your grandmother or your aunt is sick is to pick them up in your car and take them to the Accident and Emergency at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which then becomes a clinic.

Sir, in other words, what we are doing is we are wasting our resources and the sooner we start looking at these areas and try and involve the total community in solving the serious problems because of the aging population, and this is not the first time I have spoken about the aging population. I spoke about it in the 1980s. I spoke about it in the 1990s. This is 1996. At that time I coordinated an exhibition for the elderly and we did not get the support that was needed. I complained that no provision was being made for the elderly and, unfortunately, the persons in high position who could assist, and who were invited to open it did not turn up. I had to open it myself. That is how we care about the elderly. It is very serious. People do not seem to be interested. You cannot wait until the aging population, the pensioners, are more than the working population and then start at the last minute worrying how you are going to manage because the arithmetic is not going to add up.

I urge everyone to take the aging population very seriously because with aging comes a lot of chronic disease problems which, as I said, will land the elderly in the QEH at over \$100 per day which we do not have.

I support this Resolution but I am volunteering publicly my assistance, free of cost, to assist in anyway

in trying to develop a plan or try and do some research or whatever is needed in planning for the future.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Resolution. I would like to say that I support Senator Davis in the sense that I would like to see more than 2½ per cent increase. I will come back to that a little later.

Sir, the Prices and Incomes Policy agreed by the social partners has been effective in keeping the retail price index constant for the past five years and this has been stated by the Central Bank so I think it does contradict a little bit of what Senator Davis was saying in terms of the high costs. However, that in theory does not apply really in practice because, as we see it today, you have a few dollars in your pocket and you turn around twice and the money is gone. So even though we talk about the constant pace of cost of living it is increasing daily.

Sir, this whole thing about pensions over the years has been a political football by many political parties in the past. I am not one at pointing fingers, but they always seem to use it as a tool prior to elections to give pensioners more money. That is the impression one gets out there that pensioners only get large increases toward election time. However, as we are aware that elections are not around the corner there may be by-elections so one is left to wonder. All the utility bills are supposed to be paid by Government. 3.40 p.m.

But there is a discriminatory way in which some people pay and some people do not pay and one wonders what sort of means test they do to have some people pay and some people not pay. The question is, what is happening and how do you correct that? Furthermore when VAT is introduced we are going to see maybe 15%, 17½%, we do not know yet, but we are going to see an increase in the telephone bills, VAT on telephones and VAT on electricity and these poor people are going to be asked to take this burden. Surely 2½% is not going to help them in this situation and I am calling for this for all pensioners to be zero-rated, not exempted, zero-rated from VAT as far as electricity, telephone and whatever other essential services they have.

Then Senator Barker speaks about the serious impositions on the budget that it would have on the amount of people who would get these large increases. I agree with him. I think all of us agree with him. He also says that he does not want to make any emotional statement but he is very emotional. He does not want to make it political either but he talks about what the party did and what the party did not do and I would take the opportunity to remind him about the history of the Manifesto of the Democratic

Labour Party who in 1986 abolished taxes for pensioners. You must bear these things in mind and not just swipe at one thing and forget the other. Bring everything in.

However, Sir, during the Estimates I stood up in here...

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order, the Honourable Member reminded me that the last Government abolished income taxation on pensioners but he is misleading the House in that he failed to tell this Chamber that the same Government put back on taxes on pensioners in 1992.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That is no point of order.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Mr. Deputy President, that is the sort of ignorance that comes across...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member must withdraw that statement.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: I withdraw, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are you saying that I am ignorant?

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: No, Sir. I was referring to...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You are not referring to any Honourable Member in this Chamber.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: No, Sir, just the point of order. It is the ignorance.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: No, No. You must withdraw that. Every point of order has validity in this Chamber. Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Thank you, Sir. So, Sir, Senator Barker again speaks of the high impositions that it would have on the budget if we were to give more than 2½% increase. During the Estimates, Sir, I stood up in here. I almost spoke for the whole length of time and I was talking about high taxation, I was talking about withholding tax, I was at pains to point out all kinds of problems and when I was speaking I mentioned Lotto. Actually I mentioned Olympio to be more precise. Other colleagues, Senators Workman and Lynch stood up and went into more detail about the various lotteries and I am suggesting, Sir, that if the Government were to abolish all the lotteries in this island and set up a proper system, even if it is private sector, to manage properly the national

lotteries we in Barbados would have a lot more money to play with. A lot of that money could go towards helping the old age pensioners and that would also help to raise the bands not up from 13 000 to 15 000 but up to 18 000 and more. When I say the bands I am talking about the tax bands. If the Government had a national lottery and the profits of that lottery were well disbursed we would not find ourselves or have other Ministers standing up and telling us we cannot afford it. It is a new Government, they must come with innovative ideas, they must think positively and do something about it but Governments come, Governments go and we see the same sort of thing going on and it is not good enough.

Sir, while I support the increases I would like to see the pensioners get more increase. I am happy to say that I have noticed that some corporate bodies in Barbados, like the supermarkets, are looking at the Senior Citizens and giving them discounts. I believe all of us have to look at senior citizens and respect them and care for them and give them discounts. It is time that all the pavements in Bridgetown should be level so wheelchairs can go up and down. We have a few but we need to do all. Do not start and stop because a lot of our senior citizens are incapacitated.

So, Sir, all of these things we have to look at and I hope that a concerted effort will be made by all concerned, not only in the corporate Barbados but in all Barbados because we are going to be old one day, if we live, and some of us may be better off than others but the vast majority will be poor and those are the people that we have to look after so I hope a concerted effort would be made by everyone concerned, all citizens, politicians, business community, everyone, so that we can look after the interest of the elderly. I support the Resolution, Sir. Thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy President, I sat and listened to my colleagues. I am glad you have taken your lessons well because on the Estimates Debates I sought to bring to the attention of this Honourable Chamber and to the attention of the Government of Barbados the serious crisis which confronts this country in our aging population. The challenge of aging is a very real one. It is one which has forced many developed countries to go on the retreat in a number of social programmes implemented over the years for the protection of the well-being of the aged. Today in Great Britain the retirement age for females has been increased from age 65 to 67 by 2005. Today in the United States there is great discussion on extending the age of retirement also. So Barbados we have to come to grips with this aging problem and we have to deal with it in a sensible way. There has been talk about indexation of pensions. Pensions are indexed in Canada and within the last month the Government of Canada has gone back on its proposals to

increase allowances for pension contributions as tax deductibles. Indexation although desirable and although the positive route to take has serious implications in terms of costing the state unless we can maintain our prices at the kind of level which we have today. If we can retain our rate of inflation at 2% then I welcome indexation but if our inflation rates gallops to beyond 2% indexation can surely bankrupt the Treasury of Barbados. So although desirable I recognise that we have to pay very careful attention to it. 3.50 p.m.

I know what we are asking for. I sat and listened to Senator Davis and to me it was a very touching plea. I understand her concern. She is a pensioner and, when one looks at 2.5 per cent or \$20.00, I want to say that it really is minuscule. It is a very small amount and that is why I say that the Government of Barbados if it really is serious about the welfare of the aging must at this time introduce tax incentives programmes to encourage individuals both in the public and private sector to make provisions for their retirement. We recognize that the state cannot do all. In real terms in order for a man or woman at the age of retirement to maintain a decent standard of living that individual must retire on 70 per cent of final earnings in order to maintain a decent standard of living. At present, Government pensions are paid at the rate of between 50 and 55 per cent. So for starters we can say that all Government pensioners in Barbados are existing on a below standard of living pension. The difference between 70 and 55 is 15 per cent and that is a wide gap. But in order for individuals to be able to get this kind of pension which is a comfortable amount, there are some things which have to be done. There must be a lot of moral persuasion on the part of Government. We recognize that Barbadians like to have a very good standard of living. We like to enjoy the good things about life. What must happen today is that we must take stock and this calls for a certain type of mature leadership.

We must have people at all leadership levels in our society who are going to be prepared to come out and say to Barbadians – it is all right to have the big beautiful house. It is all right to have the big expensive car. It is all right to go on your holidays every year to Disney World and New York and your shopping trips in Puerto Rico, but stop and think about the old man or woman you are going to become. This must come from the top not only in Government, but in the church and school. We have to get home to our people that the only way everybody on earth can enjoy a comfortable retirement is if that individual sets aside a portion of present earnings for the future. That is the only way that it will be possible. This reminds me of a little story in the Bible when you used to go up to the bald head man on Sunday. I would like to encourage us as leaders because as Members of the Senate there are people in the community who look to us for advice. We have children. We have our relatives. We have members of

organizations. This is something that we need to bring on the agenda. We need to bring this aging phenomenon on the front burner in Barbados. We can no longer sweep it aside and pretend that it is not here with us. The baby boomers who were born immediately after World War II are the people who are presenting that serious challenge to us today. One of the serious problems we have and Senator Rickinson spoke about this. This is something that was positive in the past. We have managed to keep our population down. Our family planning has been very successful but that has negative implications for us today with our aging population and in some developed countries they have even been discussing immigration as something to resort in order to help them to solve their aging problem. They have been discussing increased taxation. That is not the route that I would suggest we go in Barbados. We cannot afford it, but I think that Government has to recognize that the pay as you go system of retirement planning is not working. It is costing us \$66.7 million today to fund Government pensions and unless something is done now the next 10 to 50 years this figure will almost double. That have implications for our other social services for education, health services and all those areas in which Government has to put national resources for our development.

Therefore, I would not want us to debate this in any slight way. We need to recognize that it is critical and we have reached the crisis stage in Barbados. I would like to suggest that we look at some instruments which we can introduce in Barbados. I noticed the Governor of the Central Bank has been making reference constantly in recent times to savings and investment and trying to find a way to lure people away from the credit card environment to savings and investment environment. The problem that we have though is that we do not have the money market in Barbados and it has not been responding at the rate necessary in order for us to do these things. But I do not think that we should allow 1996 to pass before we put certain instruments in place to encourage Barbadians to get into the savings and investment programme. There is an instrument referred to in North America as the Registered Retirement Savings Plan. The Registered Retirement Savings Plan is an investment vehicle which allows individuals to buy it with insurance on it that in the event you die before old age there is a sum of money available...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is the Honourable Member selling insurance to the Senate?

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: But that is an accumulation vehicle which at the age of retirement pays a monthly benefit to the individual. There is also an instrument referred to as a Registered Retirement Income Fund. This is another instrument which individuals can use to set aside a certain percentage of income every month and you do it from your first pay cheque to your last. It is done on a deferred taxation plan so that you do not pay

any income tax now and you get the benefit later. You pay tax but then you are on a lower income level so you pay tax at a lower rate. These are the types of incentives that Government needs to put in place. There is a deferred profit sharing plan which I want to see the private sector embark on. Today in Barbados there is a lot of talk about an Incomes Protocol and people being paid based on productivity who are getting productivity bonuses and this kind of thing. I would like to see a percentage of these productivity bonuses set aside towards individuals retirement because a very small percentage of our workers in the private sector are entitled to pensions. We are discussing public sector pensions today but at least the people who work in the public sector have guaranteed pensions, small though they might be. But we have a number of individuals who work in private and who have done from their first working day to their last and they are entitled to only a National Insurance Pension and incentives must be put in place. We must encourage them to save towards their retirement.

Mr. Deputy President, mention was made of package care for our aging. I have made a note of that because I think that it is very important. There has been a recent introduction of something called long-term care insurance in North America for the same reason that the population is aging and because of the access to drugs and modern medicine people are living to a very old age but with chronic illnesses. As a result, they need special care and it is costly to keep these people going during their old age with these chronic illnesses. This is another challenge we have to deal with in Barbados. We have our Drug Service Scheme and we have our pensioners who have access to these drugs and they are suffering serious illnesses and they are managing to stave off the very devastating effects of these illnesses while they become very old. We have to deal with this and I agree with my fellow Senators who made reference to the Home Help Programme. We must make sure that that programme is working. We are not going to be able to keep a Barbadian in an institution over the next couple of years during old age not from 70 to 95. 4.00 p.m.

The statistics for Barbados show that up to 1996 the average Barbadian male will live to age 95 and the average Barbadian female to age 88 or 90, so we have some really serious problems confronting us today. Therefore, it is very important, it behoves all of us to pay very special attention to this aging problem.

While I support any measure which attempts to look after our aging population, I agree that this is a small amount, but of course I have already stated that I recognise a lot more has to be done. I also accept that unless this Government, and any Government in the future, takes the aging challenge seriously, we will not be able to read

that Barbados is No. 1 on any United Nations index or anything like that, we will plummet to the bottom of that human development index unless we take very special note of our aging population and the programmes we put in place in order to deal with this matter.

I support an increase in pension benefit for those individuals who have made a significant contribution. When I entered the work force in 1970 I was made to believe that a job in the public service was the best job to get. I was told that you would be paid a small salary, but don't mind, you had a guaranteed pension. I understood that to mean that I was giving up a portion of my earnings at the time to guarantee me a decent pension later, but as I look today at this Resolution before me I have to agree with those individuals who are pensioners in the public service that is not the case. I really hope that the Government of Barbados will take stock now and start a fund. It is necessary to have a fund – I will not say a national lottery, because I do not support lotteries – but I would like the Government of Barbados to start a retirement fund to which public servants should be able to contribute. Non-contributory schemes are costly, but I think if individuals recognise that it is something they are doing for themselves they will make the sacrifice now. I would

like to encourage the Government to embark on a special pension fund to supplement this state pension here which we are discussing today, because it has shown that it is inadequate. It will never be adequate. People cannot live on it, they deserve better and I believe the only way this can happen is if you are encouraged to make your contribution but given a tax incentive for doing so.

Those are my few remarks. That is my contribution, Sir.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to move, Sir, that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Senate be adjourned *sine die*.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
4.05 p.m.

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3. Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year 1995.
4. Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Port Authority for the year ended December 31, 1994.
5. Health Services (Food Hygiene) (Amendment) Regulations, 1996.

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