THE

SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 27, 1998

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, May 27, 1998 at 11.20 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 the Hon. P. C. GODDARD (Minister of International Trade and Business)
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 the Hon. Miss O. P. SYMMONDS, G.C.M.
Senator J. D. E. BOYCE
Senator Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON
Senator S. P. BERNSTEIN
Senator C. LeR. TROTMAN
Senator Dr. V. J. DAVIS
Senator Miss J. C. ODLE
Senator N. A. LYNCH
Senator N. P. WELCH
Senator C. K. LAURIE
Senator Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is now in session.

PAPERS

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

1. Exchange Control (Business Establishments, Purchase and Issue of Foreign Currencies) Notice, 1998.
2. Draft National Physical Development Plan, 1998.
3. Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines and Procedures for Barbados.
4. Annual Report of the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation for the year 1996.
5. Barbados Water Authority (Water Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
6. Public Officers Loan and Travelling Allowances (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
7. The Business Transfer (General Finance Corporation Limited) Vesting Order, 1998.
8. Green Paper on the Report prepared by the Task Force on Nursing.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that Standing Order No. 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of this Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. Deputy President, we have these Standing Orders which say we should conduct our

business in a very special way. I find it very strange that time after time we come here and we have to suspend these Standing Orders which state clearly what we should do.

This particular Standing Order, as far as I understand it, says that we should get notification of resolutions that are being debated. Again today the Leader of Government Business makes a proposal that we suspend it. We do not get the courtesy of an explanation why it is necessary to suspend it and to suspend it time and time again.

I think the time has come when at least we are told: "We need to pass a piece of legislation. We are sorry it did not get to you. It is somebody's fault that it did not get to you so that you could do your research and so on." It is understood what the Senators can do under the Standing Orders. Therefore, I find it very difficult to agree to this continuous suspension time and time again. I think it is somebody's fault that we are not getting these papers, if not I would like an explanation. I think it is due to the Members of the Senate that they get an explanation why this suspension is necessary.

I think we take Suspension of Standing Orders very lightly and I do not think we should do so. I think the whole reason for Standing Orders is for control of the Senate and for them to be suspended to me is something I think should not happen.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, this Standing Order in question, as the goodly Senator knows from Order 45(2), relates to the interval between the first and second readings of a Bill, not necessarily in relation to the circulation of the Bill or things of that nature.

The normal practice is that when Bills are circulated to Members of the House of Assembly, they are also circulated to Members of the Senate so that if Members wanted to do research on a Bill, for example, they have substantial time. Some time after that, and that is usually some three or four weeks after the Bill was circulated to the House of Assembly, because after it is circulated to the House of Assembly at the same time the Senators get theirs, the House of Assembly debates theirs. It is passed and usually we do not deal with matters dealt with by the House of Assembly until at least a week after, or more in some cases, so that Senators have a reasonable idea of when the debate on the matter will actually occur.

The Standing Order specifically speaks to, not circulation of Papers but to the interval between the first and second reading so that basically all it is saying, and what we are proposing by way of the suspension is that having had the Bill in hand three weeks or so before, then when we come here today, rather than my giving notice of this Bill under Introduction of Bills, because a printed notice would have gone out already, Members know that the matter is coming to be debated.

We have never called Members to a meeting one day and sprung something on them they did not know was coming so the notice is already circulated. However, in terms of the formalities of the proceedings, one goes through a first reading and all that means is that in modern days of reproduction, rather than someone having to actually stand and read the speech so you would know it and have some time to learn about it and so on, you take it as having been read, as you would do in the Minutes of a meeting of a club, for example, the BAS, so that the introduction is the first reading.

In the Introduction of Bills, I would move that the Bill be read a first time and the second reading is where we debate. Basically, Standing Order 45(2) is proposing that rather than my just simply saying...

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy President. I take objection to the Honourable Senator misleading the Chamber and referring to the BAS as a club. It is much too valuable an organisation to the Barbadian society to be referred to in those terms, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: No point of order.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I am now aware for the very first time that a club is a pejorative construct and basically in terms of the corporate structure, the structure for governance of organisations – a club is a particular form of entity where three persons associate for common purposes.

The point of the matter is that without the suspension of Standing Order 45(2), what we would do is to come here on a given day with a Bill that has already been circulated three or four weeks ahead for Members who want to do research to do their research. We would simply come today, for example, and I would rise to say: "I beg to move the first reading of a Bill to amend the Police Act." I would leave it there to debate then five days later, so you would have four weeks plus five days as opposed to four weeks to do the research which we have spoken about. That is all we are proposing to do to suspend Standing Order 45(2) so that Members, having had time to study the matter, would be able to proceed expeditiously with the debate and the conclusion of the matter.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: A point here. I do not know if it is a point of order, but the Honourable Leader of the House did not explain why we could not be told the reason for the suspension. That was all I was really asking. We are just suspending it with no reason being given and I think as a courtesy to the Senate that the reason needs to be given.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would like to refer Members of the Senate to Order 60(2) which is the Standing Order Committee. If Members feel there is need for a readjustment of these Standing Orders, they should use that Standing Order to have the Orders looked at again in the light of modern development. If there is no more debate on the matter, I will put the question.

The question that Standing Order No. 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of the day's sitting was put to the Senate and agreed to.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY the following Bill was read a first time:–

Bill to amend the Police Act, Cap. 167.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Public Business is the order of the day.

ORDER NO. 1 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF LAND AT COUNTRY ROAD, ST. MICHAEL FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING A NEW OFFICE COMPLEX

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, approval of the Senate is being sought for the vesting of land in the National Housing Corporation. This land is the property at Country Road, St. Michael which has been the home of part of the offices of the National Housing Corporation for many years now. That land is owned by the Crown. It is proposed, however, that the site be developed in order to provide for enhanced office accommodation for the National Housing Corporation. The property is some four acres in size and it proposed that the Corporation will be able to reconstruct the facilities and merge, for the first time their technical and administrative offices which are now in different locations. That would, of course, promote far more efficient management and the like. In addition, the property which is currently in use at Country Road has proved to be inadequate.

11.25 a.m.

Additionally, the existing building has been discovered to have some major structural defects and as a result is no longer a safe place in which to work. In fact, the National Housing Corporation's administrative offices have temporarily been re-located to Roebuck Street, the former Alleyne Arthur building on Roebuck Street. In order to facilitate that, the National Housing Corporation must be given clear title to the property and the Crown is proposing by way of this Resolution to give effect to that.

The other issue which arises in this matter, Mr. Deputy President is the whole question of office accommodation generally for governmental offices. It is proposed in this construction as well to provide some additional space where it is possible to accommodate additional agencies of the Government.

Mr. President, I beg to move that Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy President, this Side obviously has no difficulty with the Resolution in question as it relates to the need for National Housing Corporation offices at Country Road to be re-done because certainly that is one of the Government offices which even a cursory glance as go you pass it, indicates an urgent need for attention. As a matter of fact, if I had the decision to make, I would have probably put that on the front burner of Government's Business of late.

I think that the officers and the workers at the National Housing Corporation have been crying out for a long time about the conditions that they have to suffer because in the condition that office is, one cannot talk about condition that you work in, you have to talk about conditions under which one suffers.

There are dilapidated stairs and windows that do not shut. This has been the characteristic of this building. When one bears in mind that the National Housing Corporation does not operate in isolation for instance like a Government office like say a Government Laboratory or something like that, which would not be in frequent contact with people, the fact is that National Housing Corporation is probably the most visited office of Government by the people of this country.

As she spoke, all be it in an Aside, Senator Forde reminded me of the large sums that have been spent for instance, in very quick time in completing the Ministry of Education Building at Constitution Road. There is the view that there has been some degree of extraordinary spending...

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy President, I have not yet made any contribution to this Honourable Senate and therefore I would like Senator Boyce to please refrain from making these comments. I have not formally said anything here yet today.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That is very correct. Senator Boyce, we do not base our debates on Asides. If the Honourable Member had spoken then it might have given you some sort of a leeway. I will ask you to refrain from making comments of replying to Asides at this special time. Thank you.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy President, I stand by your ruling but Senator Forde reminded me of the situation at the Ministry of Education where, Sir, she is Parliamentary Secretary. So looking across the table at the Honourable Senators my mind was jogged.

Sir, we need constantly as policy makers in this country to bear in mind the conditions under which the officers who work to keep the engines of Government turning smoothly, the conditions which they are actually forced to operate. Sir, the question of maintenance of buildings come up from time to time and we hear speeches from the Government as if this is a new found *modus operandi.* The point is that even as we speak, there are buildings of recent vintage whose usage would have occurred more regularly under this Administration than under the Administration of the Democratic Labour Party, that is if you are going down this kind of partisan argument. This is not the one that I am going down but I just wanted to make a reference to it, Sir.

Sir, the point is that maintenance is an ongoing exercise and the fact that buildings have deteriorated and we are about to make special repairs of them is not something that I think that we should be in here or anywhere else for that matter trying to appear as if, for some deliberate reason, one administration might have left this out.

I think that it is a fact that even in the private sector – I like to talk about private sector in here a lot because a lot of people in Barbados like to give the impression that the private sector of Barbados is some special breed of person beyond the normal Barbadian civil servant or the normal Barbadian worker. It is my view that the same stock from which we draw our policemen, from which we draw our clerical officers in the Government Service and our customs officers is the stock which goes to make up our private sector. Even in the private sector, there are instances of extremely poor maintenance by way of the conditions of some of their facilities.

The reality is that when decisions have to be made about how money is spent, it is almost always that the decision makers go for the areas, which to their mind are crucial or vital at that time. That, for a lack of more elaboration, is the bottom line in the case of the private sector.

Similarly, in Government we are not making decisions on a daily basis just related to property or plant maintenance. The fact is that Governments are faced with major decisions from time to time which do not allow it to have the kinds of funds necessary all the time to carry out the kinds of repairs and services that should be carried out. I think though that because this Administration has been boasting about the excess funds which it has at its disposal, the time is ripe when Barbados, not the Barbados Labour Party, when Barbados benefits from the excess funds because all of us to a man and a woman would have ensured this level of profitability. Indeed the public servants, I am reminded, are the ones who made maybe the greatest sacrifice at the time of the structural adjustment programme and they must be in a position, Sir, to benefit now in a time of plenty and certainly there is plenty around. We see the kind of celebrations which the Barbados Labour Party is engaging in and the kind of gestures which they are in a position to make. Obviously, Sir, it is time that the public servants benefit from this also.

11.35 a.m.

My question though, Sir, in respect to the particular building is what stage are we at in terms of the plans for the National Housing Corporation building? What stage are we at in terms of the planning approval? Are we at the stage when contracts are likely to be awarded imminently or is it one of these things which we are hearing about today and which will go on and on like the eternal clock as we are sometimes accustomed to in some of our business operations, Sir.

I am especially concerned about the kind of building that is contemplated for the National Housing Corporation office because I think we have an opportunity in Barbados to start to look very seriously at how we build our office buildings and our complexes and that we build them with more feeling and being more informed about the overall good of the persons who intend to use this facility.

Let me elaborate a little bit, Sir. In hot climates like Barbados one tends to go for facilities which predominantly achieve the objective of cooling the facility to a comfortable temperature for instance and in some cases we start to pay a little attention to the humidity etc. We do not therefore always take advantage of the natural ventilation which this country, by virtue of its location, can enjoy. I think that I would urge that the architects and I mean this both in the exact science and the architects as the overall persons looking after the final decision about how this building looks and what goes into this building, I would urge that the architects look at the whole question of indoor air quality for instance in respect of the new facility contemplated for the National Housing Corporation. Would it not be a great monument to Barbadian architecture and our Barbadian science and engineering if we can produce a facility which is so efficient in its use of natural ventilation and combines that use with the use of electrical energy for air conditioning, that we have a facility which operates at minimum cost and still produces a very healthy environment?

There are many of our facilities now and we had the recent example, Sir, of the old National Insurance Building where, in the event of a fault or a failure in the air conditioning system, there is absolutely nothing to resort to. I think that we all recognise that in any situation where we are using man-made equipment it is likely that a fault will occur and there will be need to either resort to some back-up system and in the event that we have gone past our back-ups

and the back-ups are all worn out we would have to resort to the natural conditions.

I am saying that we have an opportunity to ensure that this facility makes use of the modern technology in respect of achieving an indoor air quality. That is the term that is used to describe the environment in which we operate in facilities nowadays and it encompasses everything to do with room temperature. It encompasses everything to do with humidity and it encompasses everything to do with fresh air make-up etc. as required by the human body.

Sir, the facilities of the National Housing Corporation will be, as I said earlier, used in large numbers by the general public and we will have a lot of movement in and out of these facilities. Let us ensure therefore that there is provision for the handicapped for instance. I know it is a plea that might be interpreted on some sides as old and worn out, but the truth is that the facilities in Barbados as they stand now with very few exceptions have no arrangements whatsoever to take care of those of us who might be physically challenged or merely challenged by the advent of years which usually slows down our gait and requires us to lean on others for assistance.

Sir, I recall only a couple of weeks ago there was a public call-in about the facility being done at Pond Side and the reaction that one hears is not like, well you know it is true we should possibly look at including things like lifts etc., but we are hearing all kinds of excuses being offered as to why these things cannot be provided at this time. I do not think this is fair. We have to spare nothing in our provision of facilities for our people and I have made the cry very often from this Chamber but I will make it again because I feel very strongly about it. The aged of this country are not well taken care of and I will say that as long as it has to be said in Barbados. I would love the day when we can look forward to our older years, not so much because of the security of a pension or the security of some investment which we might have made but because we have developed a society who care and whom we can look forward to, to lend a hand because we will all need that helping hand as we grow older.

I would like, Sir, that the facilities therefore contemplated for the National Housing Corporation should not only be done quickly but that they be done in order to facilitate the business of Government and indeed one would have to bring all the operations, as the Honourable Senate Leader said, of the National Housing Corporation under one umbrella, one physical location because as it is now we know the kind of results we are seeing in the National Housing Corporation. So I would hope that by bringing all these agencies under one office at Country Road we would see an improvement in the service which is being meted out by the National Housing Corporation.

Let me say this. It is nothing to do with work and attitude of officers at the National Housing Corporation. It is all about the fact that there are certain bureaucratic, in the most cases, and occasionally interference. There are reports of interference at the political level that causes us to have a less than smooth operation about facilities like the National Housing Corporation. It is a very popular area and we know exactly why, simply because housing is near and dear and urgent to all Barbadian people.

11.45 a.m.

I would like to see the operations of the National Housing Corporation come under the same fast track, and I use that word deliberately, the kind of treatment that we see being rendered to other agencies of Barbados.

We are making a big thing about the land. That we cannot start building until the land is vested and these kinds of paper work have gone through. According to my short experience here, Sir, that has not always been the case. We have had situations where things have been done and we have had to deal with things retroactively and nobody on that Side complained then. So I do not see why in a matter where land is acquired, for instance, for a particular housing arrangement, or indeed as in this case has been acquired for the building of an office, the Honourable Senator can want to put forward as one of the reasons that we have to have it vested before we can start building.

Now, I am not advocating ignoring the law, on the contrary. I am suggesting that on matters like these there must be a mechanism for fast tracking the operations of Government and bringing these things to a quicker and easier decision. We see it all the time to do with foreign investment in this country.

I was watching television about two nights ago and Senator Goddard was on the television, Sir. He must have been in Barbados because it was a local show and it did not indicate that it was a recording, so he must have been here, one of those rare occasions, Sir. The officer of Government was making the point that we need to have an arrangement where the Office of the Corporate Affairs for which the Honourable Senator has responsibility, can fast track these inquiries from the IDC and the explosion that we are about to have, for a long time we have had an explosion in housing. And no one has been minded to put in place a facility to fast track that explosion and to deal with it.

I am suggesting today that we need, just as with the IDCs and the foreign sales corporations, I have heard all the words, I have heard them for a long time now, so I can recall them fairly quickly and just like in their cases we contemplate fast tracking and getting files off the desk in less than seven days, *et cetera,* such urgency needs to attend the inquiries of the National Housing Corporation. Not when they move to the new facility, Sir, at Country Road, because we do not know when that will happen. But I am talking about now. The numbers of inquiries for housing at the National Housing Corporation justify, if I may say so, even

breaking the law to have them looked at. It justifies even breaking the written law to have them adequately dealt with.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would wish the Honourable Senator to pay due consideration to his statement. This is supposed to be the law making body of this country and if a Senator is going to say that something justifies breaking the law, I think we might as well go home.

I will ask the Honourable Senator to withdraw those statements forthwith.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I will withdraw the statement about even breaking the law. I do want to make the point that I said, "even break the law", Sir. We will not break the law, Sir, instead we will establish a mechanism whereby we can fast track the needs of these Barbadians with respect to their achieving their housing.

I am sure that those who hear me understand exactly the urgency of the matter which we are talking about. This is even given more fuel when you consider the amount of acquisitions by the National Housing Corporation which again in my short term in this Chamber, Sir, I have witnessed.

I have heard Senator Laurie in a recent statement giving...I think he quantified it, I do not recall the amount of acres, but it sounded like a lot of acres to have been acquired by this Barbados Labour Party Administration, under the guise of national housing requirements, Sir. Yet the need for housing has not been in any way ended...

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy President. To impute that the Government is acquiring land under the guise of anything is improper and should be struck from the record.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I ask that the Honourable Member withdraw the term "under the guise of".

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I withdraw the term "under the guise of".

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: May I ask that it be struck from the record.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Let me say this, Sir, there have been numerous acquisitions of land in Barbados over the last four years by the Barbados Labour Party Government and none of them, Sir, to my recollection have yet been turned into working housing developments for the people of Barbados.

I say that that leaves the people of Barbados to come to one conclusion, that we are having acquisition after acquisition and not a house is being built for the poor people of Barbados, Sir. That is what I am talking about, when I say that on the one hand one set of legislation is being passed and on the other hand nothing is being done to effect meaningful change in the lives of Barbadian people under whose aegis we operate and for whose benefit those acquisitions are brought to this Chamber for consideration.

I say it is unfair to the people, Sir. I do not care how many times Senator Goddard feels to get up. The point is that it is unfair to the people of Barbados to read day after day and week after week in our newspapers about acquisition after acquisition for housing and yet they have to line up like some kind of second class citizens and have to go through all kinds of hardships and nonsensical questioning to get what should be a right for Barbadian people and that is a roof over their heads.
11.55 a.m.

I do not care what Senator Goddard feels about it because he has not had to go through the same exercise. He might not even understand what I am talking about. He does not make contact with what I am talking about. He is not even here long enough to deserve a permanent...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member should know that is an attack on the Honourable Member. I would expect the Honourable Member to behave in a better manner than that. You do not attack Honourable Members on that basis.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, we have to recognise that when we speak in here... I withdraw whatever the Chair rules, and I appreciate the ruling of the Chair in this regard. I am absolutely clear in my mind about where my focus should be in respect to Barbados and in respect to the needs of Barbadians. I am completely dissatisfied that not enough is being done for housing in Barbados whether under the National Housing Corporation programme, the Poverty Alleviation programme, the Rural Development programme, whether the Urban Development Programme, we have to do a lot more in terms of reaching and satisfying the needs of the Barbadian in respect to such an urgent area as housing.

Sir, I honestly wish the National Housing Corporation a speedy resolution to their accommodation problems. I would want to deal again with the fact that we should include in our plans for the particular office of the National Housing Corporation those factors which I referred to earlier. As a new building, one should attempt to have it and I like to think about the National Insurance Building at Culloden Road as an example of very good architecture. I am not convinced that full advantage has been taken of the natural ventilation but it is certainly a step in the right direction in respect of lighting for instance. It is a tremendously beautiful building. I do not know whose administration, Senator Forde, so it is no sense asking me. I do not know when it was built.

Sir, the National Insurance building can be a model in this regard and it is a point at which we can start. When one looks at the cost of the National Insurance building compared with some of the other buildings in Barbados, we need to make use of that kind of engineering expertise at this time in the facility that we are looking at. Sir, even before the officers of the National Housing Corporation move over to their new facility at Country Road, which I hope will be soon, Sir, I hope that this Government looks towards some kind of legislation which will allow the National Housing Corporation to act quickly on the numerous enquiries which it has in hand in respect to the housing needs of Barbados.

I hope that this kind of urging will be taken up by the Senators in here who have the opportunity to sit in Cabinet like the Honourable Leader of the Senate and that they will go back and let the Cabinet know that it might be a useful idea to fast track the enquiries for houses and allow the National Housing Corporation to go ahead with allocation on the basis of acquisition of the land and not be bogged down in legal niceties – I use that term very broadly only because I am not an attorney myself – of vesting.

I hope that this suggestion be taken seriously and that it would work towards bringing some relief to the question of housing for the poor people of Barbados whom we on the Democratic Labour Party side unreservedly represent. Thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Resolution and I just have a few words to say that I am very glad that land is being acquired for the National Housing Corporation in order to construct new offices where they can sit and work in comfort. Of course, we know that this will add to their productivity and well-being.

I must say that I cannot say the same for the nurses at the Psychiatric Hospital where the rain fell and they got flooded out. I hope that we will go beyond the National Housing Corporation and construct a new building where patients and nurses could be housed in comfort. I know the building is 100 years old and the walls are sound but what is inside the walls is the problem and the roof and the termites. It is an impossible task and it costs more to repair than it will cost to construct. The same principle has been applied to the National Housing Corporation where the building is no good for them. They have moved them into other quarters. They have acquired land and they are going to construct new buildings. Why can't the same principle be extended to the Psychiatric Hospital for the nurses and the patients? They are in exactly the same position and something needs to be done and urgently. With this, I support this Resolution.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution and to talk about the need for maintaining Government property. It is truly remarkable that in the last Administration that cut Government maintenance of property by 90% because of the devastating economic crisis that they placed this country in that I now hear a member of that Party talking about the need for proper maintenance of Government buildings. This is something that this administration has had to pick up on. We have had to invest countless millions of dollars in it.

When I recall the state that the present Registry was in when we moved in, the appalling conditions that people had to work under with no air conditioning, with windows that could not open, with doors that could not be secured, it was truly amazing and we had to move swiftly to move to proper accommodation on Belmont Road where the staff can now work in comfort and with greater efficiency. We think of the sick building syndrome that we have had to encounter and these things do not happen overnight. It happens over years and years of neglect and this is the hallmark of the legacy that the last Administration left this country.

Once again it shows penny wise, pound foolish. They got themselves into a crisis situation, crisis management, and they had to salvage the budget to maintain the buildings and the public property that belongs to the people of this country. It is neglect. It is bad administration and this is the reality of what we found when we came to office.

In fact, there were some buildings that we had to move people out of into other accommodations for their own safety. It is not just a matter of a sick building syndrome there were some places that people were working in where they were falling through floor boards.

Mr. President, you can see that this Administration has moved swiftly and with vigour to not only construct new buildings but rehabilitate some of those that have been neglected over many, many years. I think this new building in Country Road will be an outstanding building for the next century.

12.05 p.m.

While the Honourable Senator focussed on the issues of using proper ventilation and so on, I would say that you have to recognise that you need energy efficient buildings, and you must have a building which will house the equipment that the workers will be using in the future to expedite the business of Government and the people of this country. That is precisely how the building is being designed so that it will afford efficient use of information technology systems. It will allow for the latest management systems to be used. You will see in the coming months and years the benefits this building will bring to the people of Barbados in the improved administration of the housing of this country.

Of course, this Government is committed to doing more in one year than the last Administration did for all of their time in office when it comes to the issue of creating public housing for those who need it. We shall see the benefits and

the proof of the pudding will be in the eating, Mr. Deputy President.

I support this Resolution. Thank you.

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING OF LAND AT FARMERS, ST. THOMAS, CONSTANT, COTTAGE AND GROVES PLANTATION, ST. GEORGE IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to move the passing of this Resolution which is brought in respect of the development of some 217 housing lots as another part of the development of this Government's programme for the provision of housing for the people of Barbados.

You will recall, Mr. Deputy President, that the first phase of this process passed through the Honourable the Senate earlier in this session when the land at Farmers, St. Thomas, Constant and Groves in St. George were compulsorily acquired. As you would appreciate, Mr. Deputy President, the process by which the Government is able to purchase land is that by way of the compulsory acquisition which was done and then after that process is gone through so that the property owners can be compensated and so on then the Crown in turn vests the land in the National Housing Corporation to allow for the efficient development, sale, rental or lease of the property to individual persons.

The property at Farmers, for example, will yield some 47 lots with an average size of some 4 000 square feet. We have debated what that will be used for already. The property at Constant, St. George will yield some 38 lots, average size 3 500 square feet. The property at Cottage will yield some 132 lots. and so on.

Mr. Deputy President, the provision of these lots is essential to a number of particular classes of persons in Barbados. For example, there are a number of persons who would have been displaced from their existing locations by one means or another in addition to persons who are additional, new home owners. There are a number of persons who were displaced by the Tenantries Freehold Purchase (Amendment) Act which was done in 1989 which by way of changing the definition of "tenantry" caused a number of persons to have been displaced. Even now in 1998 we are still trying to find alternative accommodation for persons who would have been removed from the tenantries which they previously occupied as a result of the amendment done by the last Administration. All those persons tend to be in the lower income group and the Government is committed to facilitating their transfer to other locations. A number of these lots will be used for that purpose.

Additionally, Sir, particularly in the St. George area, for example, the area of Ashbury, Golden Ridge and Redland, that is a major Zone 1 water area in relation to the Golden Ridge Pumping and Distribution System which serves a major section of St. John, St. Joseph and parts of St. Michael. It is important for us to protect that water resource. A number of persons there will be relocated, particularly in the Groves area, which is about 2 miles away from where they are but not in the Zone 1 water area. The additional lots developed will be made available to a number of other persons who are anxious to own their own homes.

Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy President, the Resolution deals with the provision of the vesting of land at Farmers, *et cetera* in the parish of St. George in the National Housing Corporation. Again, the Leader of the Senate has been in a position to explain to us in at least three cases the number and the sizes of lots contemplated for this particular development.

We have heard a lot of comment from time to time about the Democratic Labour Party versus the Barbados Labour Party record in housing and what one did and what one did not do. The facts are that during the difficult periods of 1991 – 1993 there were areas of decline not only in housing in Barbados but in almost all other areas of the economic development. There have been declines since then too. There have been declines since 1994 in areas of the economy. That is a natural cycle we go through. One is not here dealing necessarily with the severity of it but there are declines in different sectors of the economy from time to time. Since 1994 we have observed such declines.

The point is that we have to move away from the stage where we come in here and go through these exercises from time to time and start to recognise what is the need out there. The question must be asked for instance, are we contemplating the correct kind of housing for our people in terms of the cost which will follow the kinds of developments contemplated in these areas? In other words, the provision of house lots at 4 000 or 3 800 square feet, has this been arrived at by any kind of scientific exercise?
12.15 p.m.

How about the young unwedded mother in this country who tends to predominate the requirements, or a lot of the requests for housing? How about them who are working for say $200 or $250 at the most per week and that is a good wage. Can they contemplate ownership of the kinds of lots that we are talking about here? Are we doing enough in

respect of providing the kinds of terrace units that were made available in the past by both administrations with certain improvements? Should we not be looking, Sir, at developing that technology a step further by way of providing a unit which can be afforded by the people who are making the requests.

If we make provisions for the kinds of housing lots which we contemplate here, I would anticipate that you are dealing with people with an income certainly more than the one which I just mentioned. You would have to be dealing with an income in the region of $1200 to $1500 per month to contemplate owning and building on a lot of this size. I believe that is about the ball park figure.

The point is that we have got to make arrangements for these kinds of housing questions to be answered. Not to go along merrily doing the same acquisitions, having the roads cut and the water put in and then they are lying there for a long, long time. We have to address these needs.

We have got simply to start doing the exercise of finding out what the needs are first. We need a survey to find out where the need is. Indeed, I am not saying that we have to commission any person and give them x dollars to do the survey. The survey can be produced from the information that is provided annually by the National Housing Corporation because when a person comes in and makes an application for a house or for a rental unit to the National Housing Corporation they give certain information in respect to their income, therefore we have the information. It is a matter of just putting that information together and recognising that we are not really answering the housing needs. If we were answering them, Sir, my view is that the list of persons requiring housing would not continue to grow all the time as if unabated. Indeed, the point must be made that it seems as if very few or no requests are being met.

Only two nights ago, again we had highlighted the plight of this family in St. Andrew and we heard the National Housing Corporation themselves saying that they can do nothing. Not that their hands are tied, I would not venture to say such a thing but there is nothing, absolutely nothing for them to offer these people. They have to turn to the kindness and be put at the mercies of their fellow Barbadians, Sir.

These things do not always work out, Sir. The details are important, yes but at the end of the exercise regardless of the details the solution must be found. We cannot have the population of Barbados in the streets. It is as simple as that. The policymakers of this country, the Government that is, is charged with the responsibility of finding solutions. You cannot throw your hands up in the air and say that they do not pay the rent for it or they do this or do that. That is a fact but we have got to find the answers to the people's plight or we will finish up with people of Barbados on the streets. Then, of course, we would want to blame it on somebody else and say that it is somebody from some where else that is sleeping on the streets and not Barbadians.

Our news reporters are daily tracking down cases and cases of people suffering this same kind of hardship. We cannot be doing our work. I say 'we', we cannot be doing our work properly, we cannot be adequately doing our work if this is what is happening. We should feel sometimes ashamed of ourselves and try to do better and not to wallow in any statistics. Statistics, as I have said in here already, means nothing to the person who has got to suffer the indignity. It does not mean because crime statistics are down, the man who has been robbed last night, is nothing to do with that. He was not ¾ robbed or 35% robbed, he was robbed, Sir. The lady who was raped was raped. This nonsense about looking at statistics and saying that figure shows x, y, z... we need to examine what we are doing.

I think that this Government needs to open its eyes and it can find as much solace as it wants in its programmes of the past four years or whatever, they can find as much comfort in the organisations that they have put up, the numerous organisations and the bureaucracy that they have established in one department after another but if at the end of the exercise people are going through the same pain and hardship, I say that we are not doing it right.

Yesterday alone I was in a village in this country speaking to a man who was living adjacent to a road that was newly being laid by this Administration. Admirably, yes, it was admirable, it needs to be done. More of it needs to be done, there is no taking away in that regard. The point is that the man's house is falling apart and the same agency that is supposed to look after it, has not been able to make contact with the man. I am not talking about any Minister, I am not talking about Senator Forde because she is not, as far as I am aware, responsible for anything in that area, Sir.

I am talking about the agencies that we have set up which are obviously not making contact with the people who they are to serve because here is this new road and all that this road is achieving for this poor man is that it is exposing his absolutely dilapidated home. I have made the relevant call and I trust that the authority will go back out there and expedite the assistance to this man. I am sure there are many, many cases like that around Barbados. I think we all have a responsibility in this regard.

Sir, I touched on the question of the kind of range in which we should be pitching our housing programme. We need to probably have the exercise carried out where we find out what is the affordable range of housing in Barbados because it clearly is not being done. The kind of offerings that are made are clearly out of the range of most of our people. In this regard too, Sir, there is the question of ownership. I believe that this Barbados Labour Party

Administration of which Senator Forde is a member has sat back and done nothing more about the question of ownership in these housing areas.
12.25 p.m.

I know it is a difficult question but building Port St. Charles is a difficult question too. The creation, Sir, of a marina or an extra beach outside of the waters of Barbados is a difficult question too. The question of who now owns that beach is a difficult question too but it has been answered. The administration has been able to answer it. So the same way they could answer that I believe they can answer the difficult question of how can they effectively sell the housing units, especially the terrace units, to the people who occupy them and those who are desirous of taking them.

Sir, when we start to address these kinds of questions then and only then the Barbados Labour Party mouthpieces can attempt, Sir, to parallel their record with the record of the Democratic Labour Party in this regard. As regards to the social programme which has characterised our government of the past, there is that need to bring the programme of the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission and bring them into gel with the people.

I listen to the call-in programmes quite often, Sir, because they inform me about how the public is thinking. I do not know what the Honourable Senators on that Side think about the programmes. I have heard some say they do not listen to them. I listen to them, Sir, and the precise point was being made that the programmes are complex and complicated. Imagine a guy who wants to do a little business probably selling perhaps fruit, has got to put together 5 like persons or something like that and it cannot work. And he made the point very clearly, how can it work? How can I go forward with 5 other people whom I do not even know to set up this agency and to borrow funds and then to have one of them default, for instance, and he is left holding the bag.

A common problem, Sir, but we understand the thinking of the young man. The young man is saying that the programme is good. The intent of the programme is fine and so the intent of this housing programme might be fine but unless it targets the correct group, unless it is pitched at a level that the correct people and the ones who need it most can actually get it and hold it and feel it in their hands we are wasting our time and that is my position, Sir. My position is, as long I have the opportunity to put my position in this country, it is not a position based on my being in this Senate, Sir, it is a position that I repeat out there in public. It is a position I made yesterday and it is a position yes, Senator Forde I am going to put on the platform of this country when the opportunity occurs.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would like the Honourable Member to address the Chair. You seem to have some problem with Senator Forde today.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, the Democratic Labour Party is not going to get up here and oppose any acquisition of land for housing as stated or for vesting in the National Housing Corporation. We are not going to do that. At the same time we are going to get up and make our position clear in respect to how this Government is performing because they are of the opinion that if they can dangle 350 or US$600 million in a bank account that does not belong to them in the face of Barbadians and say, that is foreign exchange reserves, well therefore then they are doing well. Until that foreign exchange reserves is made to work and to come into contact with the regular economic activity of Barbados we are wasting our time. Until that explosion in the offshore business sector occurs we are wasting our time and we wait with bated breath on the detonation, Sir, and when that particular explosion will occur.

Sir, we have got to also examine the record of the Barbados Labour Party in this simple question of acquisitions because I have read in recent times of situations where we acquire land, we develop land under the same arrangements, intentionally for housing, and then before, as they say, you say Jack Robin you sell the land back to the original owner, or give it back. That is not the way it should work. That is not the way it is intended to work and this Barbados Labour Party Administration and sometimes I believe I might be giving them too much guard, Sir, when I draw them out in these areas, giving them too much guard, Sir, as to what the actual feeling is out there on the streets about them, where they are, because they might, in their own minds, have themselves on a pedestal of endearment to the public of Barbados which does not in actual fact square with the rank and file of this country.

Sir, I do not want them to do anything about it. I want them to remain exactly in the mode that they are in, high on a cloud 9 where there is no land, where there are no housing needs, where there are no Barbadians. But I would love them to remain high on cloud 9 and let us get ahead with our business on the ground here in Barbados and get back to the plough and start to perform in a way that some of the needs of our Barbadians, the social needs of all Barbadians in respect of housing and many other areas.

I am glad about the structure of this Order Paper today because we are going to get to talk to many areas of Barbadian society today where we need to come back, drop anchor, offload the ship, take it to the nearest port, examine the cargo and decide where we are taking the different bits of cargo, Sir, because some of them do not belong to Barbados. Some of them do not belong here and we will have full opportunity in the future to deal with these matters. So I hope that the Barbados Labour Party Administration will deal adequately with the area of translating this kind of Resolution into actual difference on the ground in Barbados, Sir. I am grateful to you.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. Deputy President, I was very relieved when Senator Farley explained that the Resolution is not going to vest the whole of St. Thomas and St. George in the National Housing Corporation. In looking at this resolution I refer to the Paper laid in the Senate this morning. The draft National Physical Development Plan in section 2(1) it states the goals of the plan which are obviously the goals of the Government which are actually to protect and encourage the use of agricultural lands by maintaining ...

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, just on a point of order. I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member when he is making a good point but just for the utmost clarity, the document laid is still a draft document, a document of the consultants. In the Physical Development Plan there is a specific procedure including parliamentary approval for the Physical Development Plan. It does not become the plan of the Government until it goes through that stage so it may very well be accepted in whole or in part. At this stage you cannot say that is the Government's plan.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. Deputy President, I am referring to a document of the House. It was laid in the House this morning. It is a document of the House and that is why I am discussing it.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Can I have a ruling, Mr. Deputy President?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: There is too much crosstalk. Senator Laurie is on his feet and I am prepared to hear Senator Laurie only. Thank you.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: This document purports to in draft give the goals of the Physical Development Plan of the Government of Barbados. It is in draft I admit but these goals could not have been dreamt up by the consultants, it would have to have come from the Government. Anyhow let us say that it is the expression of the consultants. This is what we pay them several hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars to produce. If they have produced it, this means that these very high quality people have said what is to happen with the land in Barbados in their opinion. I happen to agree with them that one of the major goals would be to protect the agricultural land. It also says that it would discourage the conversion of arable lands to non-agricultural use. They also said, "the guiding of non-agricultural uses to the urban corridor and rural villages."
12.35 p.m.

Now, when we look at the proposal here, the areas of Constant, Cottage and Groves Plantation in St. George fall within a rural village as defined in this plan. If one looks at the map opposite page, section 2, you will see that the land in St. George does fall under that. The area of Farmers, St. Thomas is a Zone 1 agricultural area and therefore according to these people, they should not build houses there. This is a particular area where they have gone away from the village and gone out into the agricultural land to acquire sites for housing.

I understand that recently surveyors were seen up there surveying the field across the road. Apparently Government will come to Parliament and ask us to acquire more land at this same very area and it is entirely against what is in the national physical development plan draft.

I am asking if we could please just look at that question of Farmers again. There is land adjacent to Hillaby Village belonging to the same estate, just about half of a mile away, which could be acquired in place of this land and would be a natural expansion of a village, as is the case at Cottage, Constant and Groves. These are expansions of an existing village. I can see that village expansion is going to happen and this will occur in the particular rural communities that have been set up in the Plan. Therefore, I would beg the Government to please postpone building and give it another thought before you put houses on it.

Thank you.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this resolution and to note, Sir, that sometime ago in this said Chamber we approved the compulsory acquisition of this land for the purposes stated.

This resolution is for vesting the said land that we approved some months ago into the National Housing Corporation. So I do not understand what all the haranguing is about because this matter was thoroughly ventilated in this same Chamber already. We discussed it and we aired our views and the matter was passed. So to bring it back up now is just an exercise in futility.

The point I want to make, Sir, is that the Physical Development Plan which was circulated is a proposal which now, according to the law has to be the subject of public inquiry. There are going to be public sessions on the said proposals where the people of Barbados would have a say now in the policies that go to make up the Physical Development Plan.

That, Sir, is the point.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are we debating the Physical Development Plan now? Or are we debating a resolution to approve the vesting of land at certain areas in the National Housing Corporation?

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, we are discussing the vesting of land, but the point was just made that we on this Side were acting contrary to the provision of the Physical

Development Plan which is not in effect yet. That is the point I want to make.

Sir, I want to talk about housing development because as I have said on many occasions and many times, the area of housing is in my view the area of our greatest social needs in this country. That cannot be contradicted. It is the area of our greatest social need in this country. What we found, Sir, is that when we came into office we had no land on which to carry the developments. The last Government was very tardy in ensuring that there is land for the people to satisfy their housing demands.

So the first item on the agenda would have to be the securing of land because you cannot build houses except you have land on which to build them. That is a simple fact. That is a simple fact that there was no land available on which we can carry out a proper housing programme. Sir, this talk about agricultural land forgets the fact that there is in Barbados a lot of agricultural land that is not being used. We can realise all of our agricultural goals if the land that is earmarked for agriculture is being worked as agriculture land, but what happens is that a lot of people are speculating on the land. They have the land but they refuse to plant on the land with the hope that at some time to come they will get permission to do other things with the land.

The point is not an acre here and there for housing. That is not the problem. The point is that the land in this country is not being used effectively. That, Sir, is a fact. If you go through the country you will see hundreds of acres of land are vacant. I do not know if the Honourable Senator would want to own any, but that is beside the point, but hundreds of acres of land are there lying idle and people in this country have their housing needs unsatisfied.

So if we have to take up a few acres of land for housing we will do it, because the bottom line is about people. And people must take the first place in our developmental thrust. So every time we acquire an acre or two for housing, we are going to get certain elements in this country getting up and talking about things that they know little about. That, Sir, is the point. A couple of acres here or there is not the issue, the issue is the hundreds of acres that are lying unused all across this country.

I am tired of hearing uninformed comments about land use. If a few acres at Farmers is going to mean the demise of the agricultural sector. God help us. When, Sir, we know that the same Farmers is being used to resite people who are living under terrible conditions in the White Hill area. I challenge the Members in here to go in White Hill and see the precarious position under which our people are forced to live. Especially now with the rain about to fall, they go to sleep with fear in their hearts because they know that sometime during the night there could be a serious land slippage and shifting of land and they could be in serious danger.

So this question about a couple of acres at Farmers which the Honourable Member is hampering on every time he gets up is totally uncalled for. The point is that the land is next to a school.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy President, the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber when he talks about a couple of acres at Farmers, Sir. We are talking about 47 lots of 4 000 square feet each. That is more than a couple of acres, Sir, I submit.

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, a couple of acres, or a few acres and we are told that there are about 25 000 acres of agricultural land. We are talking about a few acres out of 25 000 or more acres of agricultural land. A few acres out of 25 000 and we are going to hear a fuss about that every time we bring a Resolution about land in here. The point is that we have to meet the housing needs of the people of this country. Any alternative will involve agricultural land. In any case the point I want to make is that the land at Farmers which the Honourable Member is complaining of on the opposite side of the road is good land which is not being used. That is a fact. A lot of the land across there is not under agriculture. So I do not know where he gets this.
12.45 p.m.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy President, the Senator is misleading the Senate because that is absolutely not true. The land I was referring to is under agriculture at the present moment at Farmers and the land that you have acquired is still under agriculture at the present moment.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I stand by my assertion. If I am proved wrong, well... I stand by my assertion that the land around there is not being used. I mean Farmers in St. Thomas. I do not know if the Honourable Member is referring to Farmers in St. Lucy or some other place. The point is that the land around there is not being used for agriculture.

Sir, we on this Side have nothing to be ashamed about. As I said before, we have to satisfy the legitimate and pressing needs of the people of this country as it relates to housing. We are following a simple policy of using land which is near villages like Constant, St. George and so on, lands which are next to rural settlements, so I do not see what the fuss is about. When the same agriculturalists would want to have us accept a plan where all the land to the west of Highway 2A is taken out of agriculture, the same agriculturalists who are here talking are recommending that all the land to the west of Highway 2A be taken out of agriculture but the same people are going to quarrel when a few acres of land in Farmers go to help people whose very lives are under threat due to land slippage in White Hill, St. Andrew.

Sir, I do not understand the shallow thinking that informs such comment.

The record will show that we on this Side are cognisant of the fact that we need to maintain the integrity of the agricultural lands in Barbados but, at the same time, we have to balance that with the legitimate aspirations of the people with regard to housing. We also have to remember that the people in this country are very concerned about owning a piece of land. It is a psychological and social thing that we cannot ignore and if the Government has to incur the wrath of Senator Laurie it is unfortunate but we will have to incur the wrath of Senator Laurie. The point remains that we have to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the people of this country.

With those few words, Sir, I want to support the Resolution which seeks to vest the land in National Housing Corporation and we are sure that in the months to come because I am told that some work has already started in some of these areas that the work will accelerate and more and more people will seek the benefit of Government taking the few acres of land in order to satisfy the legitimate needs of the people. Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy President, I must say I sat and listened to the impassioned pleas of my Senate colleague, Senator Boyce, and I think the sound of his voice maybe irritates the Members on the other Side but they totally ignored the content of what he has been saying all morning and it is necessary that I, in maybe a softer tone, emphasise certain things.

I think as we debate the matter of housing in Barbados we have to ask ourselves what are we dealing with? Are we dealing with objectives or are we dealing with the actual? Are we dealing with what Government wants to achieve or what Government has achieved? I think in his contribution this morning Senator Boyce has clearly stated, and factually so, that Government has not realised even a part of what it has thrown out to Barbadians as its objective in housing. No one can deny and the reason I am making this contribution is that I watched the Governor of the Central Bank on television the other night. He burned my soul a bit and then he talked about overheating in construction.

On whose behalf is this overheating occurring? He has cautioned about the rate of building construction in this country and he has reminded us what happens to our economy when construction is accelerating at so rapid a pace as it is today in Barbados. As he spoke, I asked myself the question, who are the immediate beneficiaries of this construction which we now have to give some consideration to halting? If the Government is to realise its housing programme can it at a time when there is caution from the Central Bank that construction is accelerating rapidly? I hear the manufacturers of the concrete blocks state that it would take them some weeks before they can bring their level of production of concrete blocks up to that level to meet the construction needs at present. What we are really dealing with here is the vesting of land for construction. So what we are saying is Government has not yet started to construct but already the economy cannot carry the construction of these houses. So the question has to be asked, will we be able to realise even a part, a percentage of our housing needs, in the short term?

The Government of Barbados must ask itself the question. Can we allow our construction to continue at the rate at which it is going in non-housing and in non-lower income housing where I put it to you our greatest need is at present in Barbados?

There are people in Barbados who are desperately in need of housing, those individuals who fall into the category of low and lower middle income. We must respond to that immediate need. We see on our television at night in the news the plight – I think the staff of Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation are doing a wonderful job and I hope the Government of Barbados is paying greater attention because they are going around the country and highlighting the plight of a number of individuals in this country. One would never believe that we have people living in such conditions in Barbados.

I watched an old man on the television the other night and as the reporter interviewed him he said, "This is where I live." I have not seen a building. I saw the material on the ground. She said, "Where do you sleep?" He said, "I sleep on the pavement." His security is the watchman at Standard Distributors but he sleeps on the pavement.

I was going through a research document done by the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census and one of the areas which it pointed out to us in Barbados is that the people in the older age groups in this country are the ones who really own their homes. What this is saying to us is that we have to look seriously at the conditions, the quality of the housing of our very old people in this country. That is an area that we really need to focus a lot on.

I am really not satisfied that today as a Government and as a Government department the National Housing Corporation can tell us accurately how many of those persons on this long list dating back to 1978 have already owned their homes, how many are still on the waiting list, how many have found housing in Government rental units or otherwise and I believe that until we are able to take this information and sift through it and come up with accurate data we cannot really tackle the housing needs of the lower income people in this country. When we look at these areas and I listened attentively to the contribution by Senator Barker and he said next to the village – Constant, Cottage and Groves. I would like to find out the type of housing which we intend to allow in these areas. I have a serious concern about going into villages where people enjoy

comfortable community life, a good decent family life. Poor though they be, they enjoy a good comfortable family life community and when we encourage developments and bring individuals in of a different mentality, a different thinking, a different type of behaviour, I am concerned about how we disrupt that social fabric and that quality of community life which individuals in villages enjoy.
12.55 p.m.

I am appealing to the Government that as it embarks on its programme of bringing these houses closer to these villages that it should take into account the quality of community life that presently obtains in these villages and try as much as possible not to disrupt that. I say it because these areas are in St. George North and it is one of those constituencies in Barbados in which we can see that great contrast between village and development. We still have a lot of villages in this part of St. George but we have large housing developments.

Sometimes one wonders whether these people really live in the same parish and whether they are really coming from the same area the way how they bypass each other. The rain is falling and nobody would even stop to offer a lift and they are basically in the same neighbourhood. We have to try as much as possible not to create these disparities in these villages as we go about introducing these housing developments.

There is another concern I have about the National Housing Corporation and the type of housing and security it is providing in its housing. Sometime recently in the Senate I made reference under, I believe it is the Barbados Mortgage Finance Resolution. I am not sure that this matter has as yet been addressed but I would like to think that these individuals who are going to be obtaining these houses by way of mortgages that the National Housing Corporation would make sure that these individuals have access to mortgage protection insurance. I mean life insurance on the breadwinner, on the individual or individuals who are responsible for the payment of the mortgages for whereas in the private sector they insist that insurance protection be offered on the life of the individuals who get these mortgages it is not done through the Barbados Mortgage Finance. Most likely these individuals would apply for their mortgages through the Barbados Mortgage Finance. I would like the Government of Barbados to recognise it as a social responsibility or moral commitment to these people to make sure that when they find themselves in debt to own a property that they can offer this protection to their families that individuals in the private sector offer.

Mr. Deputy President, I think it is fair to say that since we have been in this Parliament from September 1994 we have seen this Government compulsorily acquire significant lots of land. What is not fair to say, and what we cannot say with any conviction, or as a fact is that this Government has managed to construct houses for the people of Barbados, that it has managed in any way to put a dent in the housing problem which the thousands of Barbadians face across this country.

I do not believe the Government should run away from that fact. What seems to be happening here now is that the Government seems to be embarking on creating a land bank by compulsorily acquiring the land but the people want the housing. I think it should be an ongoing process. As soon as the Government has compulsorily acquired the land, it should very soon after that, vest that land in the National Housing Corporation and make sure that within a very short period of time whatever has to be done to get around the bureaucracy that the Government is saying is responsible for the hold-up of the construction of houses, this is the Government. Government is supposed to be responsible for the laws.

In the same way that Government can fast track, and I have to repeat this because I, like Senator Boyce on my television I watched a public officer, and the urgency which he tried to press home to the civil servants about these files on their desks and these are not files, this is business. You have businessmen from overseas who want a decision now and who could call on us immediately. In the same way we recognise that an international investor wants the Government of Barbados to make a decision on their behalf within one day and within three days, the people of Barbados who live in this country and who want decent housing demand the same.

I hear about a lot of fast-tracking in international business and fast-tracking in tourism. We need fast-tracking in housing also. What is wrong with that? If we can find ways of getting around the bureaucracy and we have found ways of getting around the bureaucracy of Government, we have heard of contract workers in Government and all this thing. In the past we thought we had to go on and act and wait for posts to be created and this thing – now I hear you can go into Government Departments, and earn a salary on a scale that not even individuals who have been in there for years are earning. So we have found ways of getting around the bureaucracy and we cannot deny it. Why, therefore must housing wait? Why must housing be put on hold and asked to wait until these different departments can sort them out? Housing is too important a need for the people of Barbados to have to wait, and I do not think it is unreasonable.

I think what Senator Boyce has been saying this morning to the Government of Barbados is this. These things sound good, they look good on paper and when people read about them and they read of the pretty debates and the fancy talk and the beautiful promises they sound good but at the end of the day these people are still out there begging for a lodging. Some of them are still sleeping on the streets. Some of them are still hiding in order to escape eviction notices from individuals who no longer want to wait on them and want their houses back. Nothing is happening in the area of housing in Barbados, I mean housing on the part of Government.

I would like to urge the Government of Barbados to immediately put a hold, make sure that the rate of construction is slowed down in this country and leave some space for construction of housing because the buildings that are pulling away all the concrete blocks and are causing the shortage in Barbados are not the housing for Barbadians.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: It is the private sector and not Government then. Therefore Government is not fulfilling its obligation to the people of Barbados.

Aside.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would like to inform Senator Barker that Members of this Chamber do not talk foolishness.

Aside.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: It is a very loud aside which could have been heard by the Chair.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: If I am to go by what I have just heard, if it is not true that the construction that is going on in Barbados is not other building but it is housing, then it means the Government of Barbados is doing nothing about housing. It means that the housing that is going on in Barbados is private sector housing then because all the Government of Barbados is doing is acquiring land.

I would like the Government to identify for me one housing project it has completed since 1994 in Barbados, one major housing project that it has started and completed. I would like now a report from the Shadow Minister of Housing in the Senate on the number of houses completed so far since 1994 by the Government of Barbados. This is a Government that reminds Barbadians and I accept that under the Democratic Labour Party Government construction of houses went on hold and we reduced significantly the number of houses. I accept that because it is heaped on us on every occasion that we debate housing and we accept that. This is a Government that says there is bounty, money is here in abundance, the economy has not been so good for years, you never had it so good. Show me the housing record. The people of Barbados deserve good housing out of this bountiful economy.
1.05 p.m.

That is what we have to deal with. Until the people of Barbados recognise that of all the boasting of this Government that they are benefitting, until they can feel the benefits of all this growth in this country, they will not settle for rhetoric. I am asking the Shadow Minister of Housing to satisfy me that this Government has seriously embarked on its housing programmes and that those individuals in this country in the lower income and lower middle income of this country now have houses in which to live.

We have recognised that for Barbadians a house is a very precious resource. In the poorest of families, a house is a very important resource. I grew up in a very, very poor family, I grew up in the country and in my days in the country we did not rent. I always associated renting a house with people who lived elsewhere but not in the country. Of course, Barbados has changed but there are still a number of Barbadians who would prefer to own their own homes even if they earn very low incomes. The Government of Barbados must respond to this immediate need.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy President, the challenge is there for this Government of Barbados. The Government of Barbados has reported that there has been steady growth in the economy for the past six years. We are in our sixth year of continuous growth. The Government of Barbados has told us and we have accepted that the Democratic Labour Party Administration in the last three years or so of its life in Government did not rise to the housing needs of the people of Barbados. Yet, Mr. Deputy President, the record will show that even in those very difficult times, housing was provided, lots were provided and the Government, while grappling with the major structural problems in our economy, was responding to the needs of housing in Barbados. So to stand before the people of this country after boasting of the wonderful work of this Administration and ask the people of this country to wait a little while longer while his Government deals with all its bureaucratic red tape in housing, I see it as unacceptable, totally unacceptable.

I am therefore appealing on behalf of the people of this country, the lower, lower middle income and middle income people of this country to the Government of Barbados to get ahead with the housing project and aim to meet the housing needs of the people of Barbados.

I do not like to deal with those areas of Waterhall or Apes Hill or those areas because whenever I have to go to that area I really feel a sense of anger. When I hear Senator Farley refer to these people who are going to build at night and not knowing what is going to happen during the night, I have to ask the question why after we came here and acquired the land, why did we give it back to the owner and have allowed the owner to develop the land to offer housing that these same people cannot qualify for?

We have to be careful because Barbadians are not foolish contrary to what some people think. They observe and they understand and as Members of Parliament we must be very careful how we make certain assertions and how we try to come up sometimes with answers for some of the mistakes which are made in Government from time to time.

We will have more time to deal with this but I would like the Government of Barbados to know that it has failed

miserably so far in the area of housing and that it should expeditiously get about constructing houses to meet the needs of the lower, lower middle and middle income of Barbados.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.30 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.30 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
1.15 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, 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 THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT LANCASTER, WATERHALL AND WATERHALL TENANTRY, SAINT JAMES FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to seek the approval of the Senate for this Resolution which relates to the acquisition of land at Lancaster, Waterhall and Apes Hill, St. James for housing development. The areas in question, Sir, relate to some 15.7 acres at Waterhall Tenantry, some 35 acres at Waterhall and 7.9 acres at Lancaster. This land is being acquired, Sir, in order to provide the opportunity for the Ministry of Housing to press on with the programme of making houses available for Barbadians. All these areas in question are really adjacent or part of the larger Orange Hill area in St. James. It represents part of an already existing stable community and is capable of accommodating expansions. Like I said, some of these lands surround this broader Orange Hill area.

Part of the issue which has to be faced as we seek to pursue the matter of housing for Barbadians is the fact that, and history will show, Sir, that were it not for Government's involvement in the development of housing for lower to middle income persons that those persons might not necessarily have benefitted from much of the housing development that is going on. We can look, Sir, at whether it be Wanstead, West Terrace, Husbands, Oxnards or several other areas around the island where governmental involvement has been able to facilitate the mobility of persons upwards in terms of their comforts and persons who are able to afford a lot better accommodation.

Also, Sir, equally so, over the years accommodation has been made for those persons who are interested in having land for rent who are then able in the Barbadian tradition through the security of tenure for rental arrangement to work on building their houses in a phased manner until it is completed. Usually after that stage persons make the approach to Government to actually buy the lots that they are on. That is another aspect of housing development.

Additionally as well, Sir, the development of housing revolves around the provision of a number of units for rental to those persons who are not in a position at the point in time to be involved in the purchase.

These lands in question, Sir, are ideally suited for housing. They are easily accessible from Highway 2A which means, Sir, that the issue of transportation would not be an issue as well. Additionally there are the facilities of water, electricity supplics near at hand but of course in the further development of these areas, these facilities would have to be added into the specific developments and in fact this is one of the areas in which delays are experienced as they move from acquisition of land to ultimate development. In fact the time cycle for land development is really not much different between Government and private developers. If you examine areas which are advertised for sale by developers sometimes, some of them even advertise them before the roads and other stuff happen to be in place. You will notice that there is a length of time which elapses between the developer acquiring that land and his capacity to install roads.

Of course the installation of the roads would be subject to Town Planning approval after the surveying work has been done, the dividing of the area into lots, the installation of water mains, the installation of electricity poles and all the various other utilities are all part of the development process before the land can be offered for sale to the individuals who will then be involved in the construction of their homes. Then if it is land that is offered for sale or for rent then the matter of the individuals making their own financing arrangements is also another factor which results in some lag.

The areas in question, Sir, as I said, are imminently suitable for further development and it is proposed that these areas together would allow for something in the region of 472 fully serviced lots to be made available to the people of Barbados. That certainly, Sir, should go quite a long way in satisfying the demand which there happens to be for housing and so on. 472 lots, Sir, can house 472 families and you can multiply that by the average family size to see how many Barbadians would in fact be benefitting from a development such as this.

This, Sir, is just part of all that has been done and has been achieved so far, Sir. For example, Sir, the National Housing Corporation, Sir, has been able to start and complete the 25 housing units at Maynards in St. Peter which are fully occupied and rented by families in Barbados, Sir. A total of 91 units will become available with the projects at Pondside which is very much in progress as well as Flat Rock and Dean Town and there will be more terrace units for rental.

Another 75 units are now in the process of starting at Hoytes Village and areas like that. There are also a number of smaller projects totalling 89 units between Bush Hall, Bakers, Rock Hall, Breedy's Land, and of course some 351 lots which are being prepared at Walkers in St. George, Groves, Cottage, Orange Hill Phase 2 and so on. Therefore, Sir, the record of the Ministry of Housing stands to be examined and within a number of these projects some of which are already completed, some at the point of being started will end up by the end of the year adding in large number to the number of houses which are available.

I need not but remind you, Sir, of the joint ventures which we have done as well. The houses at Cane Garden in St. Thomas which had been abandoned by the last Administration up to the change of Government the only residents, compliments the Democratic Labour Party at Cane Garden, St. Thomas were vines and rats. The fact of the matter, Sir, is that project was abandoned. There were a number of units in various stages of incompletion just like the school across the street from Cane Garden which is now proudly opened as the St. Thomas Secondary, abandoned, Sir, vines, rats, all those things, the Democratic Labour Party. We were able, Sir, to mobilise and today, Sir, the proud families residing at Cane Garden in St. Thomas can attest to the fact that they have been able to find housing compliments the Barbados Labour Party.

Similarly, Sir, joint venture at Bournes Village on the St. George, St. Michael border. Again Government would have been there with the development of the site and a private developer was able to offer housing so that we have been using a number of different approaches to address this matter of housing for Barbadians, a mixture of full fledged public sector activity in sites and services, in rental units and in land for sale, in addition to joint ventures with the private sector and not to mention, Sir, that with the increased economic activity, with increased employment on the island, that more persons are able and they therefore have the confidence as well to go forward and make their own private arrangements thereby reducing the pressure off the demand for Governmental services. So that if you go through any and every district in Barbados and you look at the number of houses which are having renovations, makeovers, expansions and the like, Sir, you will recognise that the Government's housing programme is working.

2.40 p.m.

Further, Sir, the provision of financing for the lower income persons in Barbados through a Revitalised General Workers Fund has allowed numbers of persons who are in secure land arrangements, whether by way of ownership or rental, to be able to access the funds required to do the self-improvements which have been a hallmark of the Barbadian community over the years. That also is part of the Government's housing plan.

It would be a sad day for Barbados if a Government were to choose to pursue housing development where the only strategy that is used was the construction of terrace units for rental. Government has to use this multiple approach to the development of the housing stock in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy President, I commend this resolution to the Honourable the Senate as part of the Government's plan for providing housing for the population of Barbados and beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy President, the resolution we are dealing with this time of course, is not one of vesting, like the one before, but one of acquisition. It is about acquiring lands as stated by the Honourable Leader, Lancaster, Waterhall and Apes Hill to the tune of some 472 fully serviced lots as he indicated, at the end of the exercise.

I listened with acute interest at the defensive presentation of the Honourable Senator and indeed, I think that my colleague did do exactly as she said she would, when she outlined the facts as they relate to housing achievement in Barbados. I use the word 'achievement' because Senator Farley speaks against a background of critical land use in Barbados. It is no longer a matter which can be treated in isolation as one where we are providing housing for one income group in Barbados in one place and another income group in another place. It is one where we have to sit back and take stock of where we are. I note with interest the setting up of, for lack of the correct word coming to mind now, the Land Review Committee by this Parliament which I believe has a mandate to look into the whole question of land use in Barbados.

This, of course is, as a result of calls certainly by the Democratic Labour Party, supported by a large cross section of Barbadians who are anxious, and I mean the word 'anxious' about how housing development and how land is being used in this country. Sir, these areas, Lancaster, Waterhall and Apes Hill are of special intrigue. Besides obviously, not knowing exactly where he was located, the Honourable Senate Leader was unable to extract any kind of Barbados Labour Party consistent policy, in respect to what is happening here, because he is talking about the preparation of an area for housing lots against a background of a Government who is not, in truth and in fact, going ahead with the building of houses to meet the needs of the people in Barbados.

In fact, we have had a situation where lands in these very areas have been acquired and prepared for the construction of low income houses by the Government of Barbados. Then, we were told that these lands were to be given back to the owners and they will carry out the building of the low income houses. My first question is, Sir, why can't they carry out the building of these low income houses for the same Government. Why do they have to have the land back?

So the questions before the Government of the Barbados Labour Party are more than can be swept away with one quick statement, Sir. There are lots of questions out there being asked about this very area. The people who live at Waterhall cannot even get into Waterhall now because of the...and it is tantamount to confusion, what is going on at Waterhall. I admit that the idea is that we would bring an area into development. Yes, we must bring areas into development but why the unbridled haste and the utter disruption that are being caused in the area?

I do not grudge the people. I believe that we must go ahead with this work but we have to do it, Sir, in a controlled way. My colleague this morning spoke to the question of the fact that we can do as much damage by over-doing. I think our parents used to run it in our heads all the time as young children that it is worse to over-do than not to do at all sometimes.

The Governor of the Central Bank, (Tom Adams Financial Centre) has already sent the first warning signs across the bough of the Barbados economy that maybe, you need to reexamine your policies in respect to your activity in housing and development and bring it under control. He spoke of construction specifically. All these areas of acquisition will lead to some more construction. Construction which we need, we need a lot of it, but we need to do it in a controlled environment.

This Barbados Labour Party Administration speaks about when we did the regrading programme in 1991 and that it caused this and caused that, because we attempted to do too much in too short a space of time. So if the economists, and I do not pretend to be an economist of any sort, and those who are trained to deal with these exercises are telling us to beware of the pace which we are going ahead with these areas, why are we casting their advice aside?

I like the examples the Honourable Senator used to describe the kinds of development that he envisages for these particular areas. He spoke very lucidly about areas in Barbados where housing has turned out to be extremely useful and they have turned out to be able to serve that group of Barbados who most need it.

I recall the Honourable Senator in here criticising the Democratic Labour Party for doing just that. So it is strange this afternoon that we can hear the Honourable Senator reversing in his talk and coming to us and saying that these examples that he drew would be examples which he wanted the Chamber to note. These were the examples that he was going to follow and that is the direction he wanted to see Apes Hill, Waterhall and Lancaster go in respect to development. A development model, Sir, which was shaped by the Democratic Labour Party and which is severely consistently criticised. He spoke about the joint ventures as if a joint venture is the creation of a Barbados Labour Party in terms of strategy to deal with housing.

We can boast of our joint venture to create the housing development which was done by the Venezuelans and the Barbados Government. Then he spoke about the fact that they were able to come on board and finish Jackson in a number of interesting arrangements with the people who finally occupy the homes. And I think that the ability...

Aside.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Cane Garden. The same thing. The ability to carry on from where we have left off is not reason enough to try to criticise or discard what has been done. The fact that the school was there in the first place to be completed is testimony to the effort of the Democratic Labour Party. It saved the Ministry of Education last year around this time when they had somewhere at least to carry the students from St. Leonards rather than having them on the streets, and they have not even finished the school as yet, the same school that Senator Forde is whispering about. She needs to get up and tell this Honourable Chamber, put her mouth where her disturbances normally are, and tell this Honourable Chamber what is happening to the Jackson School, when it will be completed and when can the Barbados Union of Teachers look forward to doing the work that they have to do, the mandate of the teachers, instead of having every day to run down behind two Ministers of Education neither of whom knows what the other is doing. We will get to that.
2.50 p.m.

Thank God for the Jackson School. It was able in crisis to save the education system of Barbados and find shelter and education for our students. To this day, with all the millions of dollars floating around in the economy, Senator Forde and her partner at the Ministry of Education have been unable to complete the same St. Thomas Secondary School. My charge today to the Honourable Senator is go out there and finish that school and stop coming in here disturbing the debates of the Chamber.

Let me go on a little bit, Sir. Let us return to the Honourable Senator's presentation and recall the terms which he used to describe the housing programme of the Barbados Labour Party. I think they are interesting and we should have them recorded. He spoke of one area as being

prepared and he talked about 500 lots that are being prepared. That was one of the phrases that he used to describe the housing policy of the Barbados Labour Party Government. They were being prepared. This is what we have been hearing, precisely the point that my colleague and myself have made all day. This is what we are hearing all the time. This area is being prepared.

There is another one here. I do not know if this is English and will be acceptable by the Chair, but he got away with it because he said it and it was not stopped. The other was that it was on the point of being started. That is another shade of being prepared.

We get a situation where 300 housing lots are being prepared, another 500 housing lots are on the point of being started. He talked about another set of housing lots which will become available. That is another phrase used to describe the housing policy of the Barbados Labour Party. The other will become available. When? We do not know. In what form? At what price? Who will sell them? Will the Government sell them back again to another private landowner for him to develop them? We do not know.

So we are at a point exactly where we started. No further advanced as far as this debate on housing is concerned than we were when the good Senator was in his seat. He might have remained there.

There was one which took the cake. He said that another set of lots, I believe he referred to some in Hoytes Village, were in the process of being started. That was another phrase he used to describe the policy.

If you were to do an analysis of the available housing lots for Barbadians, the ones which the Barbados Labour Party has been responsible for we come up with absolutely no housing lots yet available.

If my analysis is incorrect it is because it is based on the information given to this Senate by the Honourable Senate Leader. He is who said it. He spoke of Pondside and Flat Rock and Deane Town. Flat Rock and Deane Town, I am sure are dreams because there the ground is not broken. At Deane Town, I do not believe they have decided which side of Deane Town they are going to use for the particular lots. No one knows what Deane Town is. Deane Town has been adopted as a word but nobody in this Chamber can tell me where is Deane Town. Senator Forde lives in the area and she does not know where Deane Town is, not for all the money in Barbados.

It is one of these points of being started, being prepared, will become available and these figments of the Honourable Senator's imagination. Even Pondside which we can see and it is because we can see it that we know that it has slowed down measurably and I am wondering as to what is the problem. I think that a word at this time from these Honourable Senators in here to the people responsible to tell them to get ahead with Pondside. We want it finished when we come to office next year. We want it complete and the people to be allocated so that we can deal with Pondside. It is a good area for public meetings.

I would beg the Honourable Senator to tell this Chamber what is happening at Pondside because we do not want to see the same situation at Lancaster. We do not want to see the expectations of Barbadians being treated this way and being dashed in this kind of unkind manner where today we are told one thing and our aspirations are high and then later on in a whisper they are all shattered.

The Barbados Labour Party has a tremendous responsibility and, as I alluded earlier, even without those areas of difficulty which they have refused to address we have the question of our land reserves. Someone talked about the Barbados Labour Party building a land bank. I am afraid about the land bank of Barbados and I am reminded of a recent public meeting held in an area fairly near to this area at which one of the persons at the public meeting when one of the speakers was talking about the housing situation in Barbados he quipped. When he spoke of Barbados he said "do you mean, Mr. Speaker, Lost Barbados?" That has a significant meaning to it.

Let me tell you why. He was playing on the word, "lost" as Barbados was once known as "Los Barbados" when the Spaniards visited. This man in his tremendously intuitive way was able to describe the situation in Barbados today as one that reminded him of "Los(t) – with a "t" – Barbados. Barbados is lost. Barbados is becoming lost and we need to pull it back now. We need to pull it back before the "baller" run out because after that there would be no pulling back. There will be drift.

We have some strange developments occurring and it seems almost characteristic of this Barbados Labour Party Administration. Every time they are in Government we get people trying to put up fences and put up barriers and to keep out this person and that person. We have to stop it. We have to have a clear position in terms of land use in this country. We have to have a clear position in terms of the right to the beach. The interesting debate that has now been raised in respect to Port St. Charles is not over yet. I am waiting to see how that one will pan out. But we cannot deal with that now because the Resolution before us does not deal with Port St. Charles specifically. It deals with land use. It deals with how Barbados should take its land and how it should use its land.
3.00 p.m.

I am not going to go into the discussion about whether it is agricultural land and whether it should be left for agriculture, or who is using the land, and who is allowing the land to lie fallow, not like how they used to allow it to lie fallow in years gone by to let the nutrients restore themselves so they can grow cane again or grow corn again. They are

lying fallow so the stones can come to the surface, as I am being reminded, Sir, so concrete can grow out of this soil.

It is a very serious situation, Sir, and I am listening very carefully because every time I hear Senator Laurie making a point for agriculture, I hear Government Senators and Ministers, or at least Parliamentary Secretaries, making less than fair comment about the contribution of the Honourable Senator in this regard. Because we have a situation to face in the very near future where, when we cannot feed ourselves, when we have no food in the ground, not so much because of the cost of these items but because of the eco-balance, and I have given a speech in here already about the whole question of eco-balance and the fact that it has to be maintained. Those of us who do not believe it is not important can continue.

Those of us who had the good fortune for instance, of listening to the lecture by Professor Oliver Headley last year at the Central Bank where he talked about this kind of sustainable and unsustainable growth will understand and it can be shown mathematically – I would like Senator Goddard especially to hear this – that if we do not restrict the kind of unbridled expansion and consumption we are going to find ourselves in a situation of unsustainability and eventually self-destruction. So there will be an explosion in Barbados, but it will not be an explosion of IBCs *et cetera.* It will be an explosion of the people telling this country what direction it wants to go in.

I have said what I had to say about the euphoria that might reign in the Barbados Labour Party at this time. They will know how to ride their horse. They must know when to pull back the reins but I am saying to them again, this voice on this lonely side of the Table, I am begging them to look again at their plans for this little small island state of ours, Barbados, as it impacts on the sustainability of the entire country and our ability to look down the road and see a Barbados of which we can be proud, Sir.

Sir, there is a young man who lives in this area who has business interest in the particular area. He and I have been chatting from time to time about what has been going on. I want to draw an example of when we go out there and we seek to acquire people's property. The point he was at pains to make to me was that he understands fully well the rights of the Government as it deals with having the resources it needs from time to time to carry out its works programme but there is a less than humane approach being handed out to the people of Barbados in this particular area.

We need to send that message too that where there is a possibility of taking the development and moving it slightly to accommodate existing arrangements – we had the same problem in the Sewerage Project where people would believe that because something was drawn on a piece of paper and because a contract was written and paid for, nothing could change it. I am happy to report, Sir, that at least by coercion and persuasion some things have been changed, some of the expectations of the residents who are affected and who will benefit from that programme, but some of the things that would affect them have been attended to and the same thing in the Waterhall/Apes Hill area.

Can we use land somewhere else and allow another person or citizen of Barbados to go ahead with their programme of development? All that will add up to bring about the larger economic pie that we are talking about and that we are looking for. We have made it very clear that the whole question of development of small business will ensure that the jobs we want to see created in Barbados are created. All over the world it is accepted that job creation, if it is going to happen over the next 10 years or so, it is going to happen through small business.

I hope that the Government and those in Government who make decisions on acquisitions because there are other areas where I see road improvements going on and when it would be 50 times as easy to take the road in one direction, the decision is taken to take a particularly difficult route so as not to inconvenience one person or the other. I am saying there are not two types of citizens.

Aside.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: I will give the example when I am ready. We must make it very clear that there are not two types of citizens in this country and that all of us have the same rights in regard to our rights to own and use our land. This question will continue to be a vexing one.

The Barbados Labour Party Administration needs to go out there, put its ears to the ground and find out if it is indeed true that there is a large degree of dissatisfaction among people whom they are acquiring land from and the methods that are being used in the acquisition. This is from the north of the island to the south of the island, to the Apes Hill area, to Westmoreland, Thorpes and all over. It is time that the Barbados Labour Party Administration, or if the person in charge of setting up these acquisitions cannot be dealt with then we will have to have them removed and put someone of a more humane nature in charge of such a sensitive area of our economy. I would take on anybody on that debate because I have seen much of it where there is one rule for one set of people in this country and another rule for another set of people in this country. For me there is one Barbadian and for me there will always be one Barbadian. But the question remains whether this is the thinking that Barbados is for all Barbadians, whether this is the thinking of the Barbados Labour Party. Even when the Land Use Committee was being set up, we had Ministers on that Side making statements in respect to what should be developed and who should develop. We continue in 1998 to have Ministers appearing and indeed using their office to ensure that certain projects go on and that other projects do not go on.

3.10 p.m.

I think that this is something that we have to be careful of. We cannot use our authority loosely, we have to curtail sometimes our first impression, our first urging and think about it. I have a policy of sleeping on it overnight. There is nothing like 24 hours to review a decision. I would urge the Government of Barbados, the Barbados Labour Party Administration to allow the process of examination of our land registry to take place, to allow the input of the ordinary rank and file Barbadian.

Another example, the signals that you are sending to the society, you have just announced the programme for reviewing our land use and the sub-committee of Parliament and you followed that with a programme which you publicised and you tell people about the opportunities to invest in the Durants Golf Course, a rejuvenated Durants Golf Course. What signals are we sending? Are we just trying to create an impression only? That is certainly the impression that I have got, that the Barbados Labour Party has a commitment to give an impression out there that certain things are being done regardless of what are the true plans.

One wonders even because this Barbados Labour Party Government is the one that criticised the Democratic Labour Party bitterly when we decided to build golf courses in Barbados. What has happened now? At a time when we have less water available to Barbados than we had even in 1991 when the Kingsland project was contemplated and the Westmoreland project was built.

Sir, I am getting confused signals and I think the Barbados public is getting confused signals. We hear people talking about, we have our own water. Nobody in Barbados has their own water. All our water resources are as a result of water which filtered through the coral stones of Barbados and are available for pumping. They are as a result of rainfall. If you find water in Bank Hall you cannot say it is your water, it does not work so. All the water in Barbados even the water on the water table, that is part of our water resources. Even the policy where we take the sewage treatment and dump it is affecting our water resource. We need to look at the costlier option of returning that water to our land and allowing it to go through the full cycle so as to become truly available to Barbadians again. Instead of that, Sir, we are getting from the Barbados Labour Party a purely propaganda position where in 1991/92 we could not build golf courses but today in 1998, with a situation which is worse in respect to our water resource, Sir, we can now contemplate four more golf courses.

I am saying that it is inconsistent, Sir. We will get time to go back to that specifically when we look at the whole question maybe of tourism or one which is more directly related. Do not for one moment believe that any land development in Barbados can go on without reference to the whole question of our broad treatment of our land resources.

Though we deal today with Lancaster, Waterhall and Apes Hill in St. James, I am sure tomorrow or in the not too distant future we will be dealing with somewhere on the coast in St. Peter or in the eastern side of our lovely island in St. Andrew or in St. Joseph or St. John as we contemplate other economic ventures. My only caution is that in all this deliberation, we need to examine what is good for Barbados in total. The information is out there, there are scientific models on which you can do this examination. Listen to the technocrats and do not be driven too much, do not be driven solely by the dangling of the United States dollar and the urge to make foreign reserves look better and better. We need to do more things for Barbadians in Barbados.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. Deputy President, I noticed in this document that was laid in the House this morning that the Dean Town, Orange Hill is a special area...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator, I do not think we have the right to debate that until it comes before the Chamber. As I understand the rules, a document is laid for consideration and then it is dealt with at a subsequent sitting. I will not tolerate that being debated at this time.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I was not debating, I was purely quoting from a document of the House. If you tell me that cannot be done...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator, it is being debated and the moment that you open it somebody else has to deal with it. You alone cannot deal with it and leave it hanging in the air.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I will re-phrase it. It is alleged that Government has announced that this area will be a special development area to build 1 500 houses. Therefore I expect that whole area will be acquired for housing.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator, that is anticipating the work of the Chamber which is prohibited in the Rules.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Shall I re-phrase it again?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: In other words, we will never know where we are going if every week we come here somebody anticipates where next Government will acquire. That is not the rule as I know it. With all due respect.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I agree to the acquisition of this land in this area because I have heard that it is going to be a special development area and it obviously is surrounded by villages and it is not in agricultural use at the present moment. Therefore I think, yes, this is the type that should be acquired for housing. Not the agricultural land that

be vested in the Governor-General acting in accordance with the advice of the Police Service Commission.

Sir, what is proposed by way of the Bill before us includes some offences in the principle Act. The Police Act is amended in a number of ways. One minor adjustment is, of course, taking the opportunity to delete the reference to the term corporal from the definitions section because that rank no longer exists.

The bulk of the Amendments relates to the insertion after Section 32 of the Police Act, hold a series of measures relating to the disciplinary code and offences which could be created and which really at the end of the day are intended to ensure a level of discipline within the Police Force which would translate into a higher quality of service by the Police Force. Because amongst the matters which are identified as offences against Police Force discipline would be, mistreatment of the public and certain actions which would contribute towards laxed security.

I see this particular measure as being in the line of quality insurance to ensure that standards which one would expect of the Police Force in 1998 are very much upheld. For example, issues of discreditable conduct relating to any action which would discredit the reputation of the Police Force. There is misconduct against another police officer and we know that a Force divided amongst itself is sure to be defeated by whatever the opposition forces might be, in this case it would be the criminal elements in the society. Therefore it is important to have clear guidelines.

Another reason why it is important to have these guidelines which are very clear, is to remove the discretionary elements in the administration of the Force so that if officers are going to be charged for offences or if officers are going to be identified as having committed an offence, they should really know up front what that offence is and that in fact the offence is basically clearly spelt out. Because even in a discipline Force, the principles of natural justice and fairness must still be able to operate. We know from time to time in looking at the history of disciplined forces throughout the world there have always been issues, whether it is in the army or the police force or whatever, of the way in which internal discipline is organised. Whether persons within the disciplined unit who face internal charges are subject to equal more or less than the level of ability to represent oneself and to plead against the charges as one would have in civilian life. But that is a highly philosophical and technical issue.

4.15 p.m.

Of course part of the breach of the disciplinary course also speaks to the matter of disobedience to orders, neglect of duty, including things like being absent from station, idle gossip when one is on duty and carelessness or neglect which permits a prisoner to escape and not moving with a certain alacrity to carry out functions which are to be carried out.

It is also, Sir, part of the offences and neglect of duty for one to omit to make any necessary entry in official documents and books, Sir. It is important, Sir, that the records in the Police Force are kept very accurate and up-to-date, because sometimes the ability of persons to either have the persons who have committed offences against them brought to justice, or in some cases where there are matters relating to insurance settlements and other matters to be resolved, the absence of up-to-date official records can be a major set back, if not a major hardship, on individuals who need this kind of efficiency in police force operations in order to have their matters resolved.

Of course the whole issue of making false and inaccurate statements on entries are offences which you would want to ensure that officers who commit those offences and therefore blatantly violate the trust that has been placed in them would be appropriately dealt with.

Improper disclosure of information. The whole question of divulging secrets, for example where operations are planned, for any officer who works to warn persons against whom the operation is planned, for example a warrant or a summons is to be issued, it would be an offence to warn anyone of the pending action and that is particularly important in matters relating to drug interdiction and other matters where the stakes are indeed very, very high. To put this provision in place is not to suggest that this matter is happening, but we cannot wait until there is clear evidence of such matters to put these measures in place either, because if we look at what happens in various parts of the world, every now and again you do find a security officer who has been involved, whether directly or indirectly, in some of these matters relating to drugs and providing warnings to suspects of pending operations and so on.

There is also the whole matter of having certain meetings without authorisation, meetings to discuss the business of the Force in an unauthorised manner. The abuse of authority would be an offence against the disciplinary code and it states specifically that a member of the Force should not treat any person with whom he comes into contact in the execution of his duty in an oppressive manner and should not conduct a search or require a person to submit to any test or procedure, or make any unlawful or unnecessary arrest. It also speaks against violence to prisoners or any other person. These are perhaps the matters in which the public would be most keenly interested because every now and again we do have the claims and counter claims concerning the actions of policemen in the execution of their duty. The police argument is always that there are guidelines that they follow, this is standard procedure. The arguments of those who are there and involved are that in their opinion there has been excessive force, there has been brutality and so on but these provisions make it quite clear that to be

abusive or to be uncivil to any member of the public and so on is indeed an offence for which the officer, subject to the appropriate investigations and so on can indeed be charged. I would hope that the public would take some comfort in that particular provision.

I also want on this matter to use the opportunity to remind not just police officers but persons in authority generally, whether it be the security guard or the teacher at the school or other persons that it is sometimes unfortunate to see how, as Barbadians, we treat each other in the normal exercise of daily work and daily activity. For example, sometimes the treatment that one might get when making enquiries as to which Government office to go into or where to park your car or matters which could be resolved with a simple clear firm instruction, but not necessarily one which is uncivil. I myself have a great dislike of uncivil behaviour and I find that in some cases it is always very unnecessary but it is something that pops up ever too often in various forms. Sometimes there are bouncers at night clubs who for some reason are uncivil to some patrons and not to others. So, Sir, it is an unfortunate characteristic of Barbados which I would just want to draw some attention to.

The whole matter of being absent without leave and being late for duty is one which is an offence. The whole matter of absence from duty and lateness for duty is one which is an issue which Barbadians have to face generally as well. There can be no doubt that lots of time, particularly productive time, is lost as a result of Barbadians being late whether it be for meetings, whether it be for going to work, even going to a party, although technically some may argue that you cannot get to a party late. But generally speaking the tendency towards lateness and a lack of respect for the time of the other individual is particularly troublesome.

Also there is the matter of absence without leave. I understand that the level of absenteeism from work places generally, both in the Government and private sector, has begun to show some level of increase and across the board it is becoming a major problem. It is of course a large headache for everyone but the larger headache would be felt by of course the smaller businesses where there are fewer employees and each employee becomes more of a key person. There has unfortunately developed a view that where there are arrangements for one to have a certain number of what they call undocumented sick days, suppose in the morning you get up and you have an upset stomach which would not require a doctor's visit you are allowed to have a certain number of those days whether it be six, twelve, whatever it might be to catch yourself and still be paid for it which is a good thing and a necessary thing. Sometimes employees would ask in October, November or December, how many days do I have left and they ensure that they take out what they call their sick days before the end of the year. I am sure there is no malice intended but there is a misunderstanding of what was the intention in granting those days. Those days are not additional holidays. Those days are there on a contingency basis only. What we need to do is to encourage our young people, because if we listen to a number of persons at their retirement functions and the older stock of persons, you would hear them saying how they would have been there for 40 years and so on without being absent and what not. It is just something that we need to ensure that as we seek to build the appropriate attitudes to work and to service that we are able to ensure that that matter of absence and lateness and so on does not become a problem.

4.25 p.m.

Now, other matters addressed in the disciplinary court, Sir, relate to the old one of damage to clothing and other articles supplied by the Force. This matter of drunkenness on the job, Sir, or drinking on duty and soliciting drink. Of course, these are matters that are prohibited according to the Police code of discipline, Sir. Even entering licensed premises, the Officers are not supposed to enter without good and sufficient cause. If they are going there on business, fine. But with good and sufficient cause they are not supposed to enter licensed premises whilst on duty or even if they are off duty, whilst they are in their uniform. Of course, the obvious areas of criminal conduct and being an accessory to disciplinary offence and neglect of health where the Officer will not follow the advice of the Police Medical Officer and so acerbates a situation. That is an offence as well.

The Bill goes on to provide for the penalties which can be imposed subject to section 97 of the Constitution. The Commissioner can impose some penalties including a fine, the stopping of the leave of the Officer, reprimand, suspension, punishment drill and other officers below the rank of Commissioner can impose all except the fine of $300. So that this measure is intended to tighten the internal discipline of the Force. It has been widely ventilated and discussed within that organisation, Sir, and should go a long way toward improving the general functioning of the Force.

Speaking of the matter of the Police Force and the general function, this is one of several things which this Administration would have done, Sir, by way of meeting the conditions of the Police Officers and the Police Force generally. You will be pleased to note the general reduction in the level of crime. That is noted from the statistics, although we are very concerned that the resources of the Police Force continue to be challenged by what seems to be an increasing use of violence as a means of conflict resolution.

Mr. Deputy President, whilst the general level of crime is down, Sir, there seems to be an increasing tendency toward the use of individuals of violence as a means of resolving conflicts. If you check the profile of a number of cases, the wounded particularly, you will notice that in a matter of two friends getting into a battle, two family members, two persons who were at the same activity, I have

a concern because, from our reports this matter of that kind of approach has its genesis at a much earlier age. I happen to have a number of friends and persons who are close to me who are involved in education and they reported that over their time in schools, for example, that there seems to be a generally greater tendency to resort to fists and to rocks. Nowadays, some students are armed with knives. They may use a chair and so on to resolve what used to be simple quarrels. Quarrels over a chair, a bag or whatever, but also the extent to which other students or young people are willing to get themselves involved in a conflict which started amongst two individuals.

So the extent to which a group is willing to join together in order to resolve a conflict that happened yesterday or last week or in St. Lucy when they are really from Christ Church, and the fact that even though you could in one case say that some persons may be hot tempered, how hot tempered could you be one week after the fact, then you return for revenge. I think that we need as part of our efforts to deal with these situations recognising that the challenges which the Police Force will face will not just relate to the house breakings and what I would probably call the traditional criminal activity, but rather actions which themselves are violations of the law, but which really stem from inappropriate coping mechanisms and having inappropriate means of resolving issues which will arise. So that the fact that persons would get into a serious wounding charge on a matter which has its genesis in a land dispute between two neighbours, is a matter of which we have to be greatly concerned.

The fact that persons will find themselves charged with damaging a bus and injuring one or two persons on the basis of finding a solution to an argument which would have started a week ago and which involves an individual who happens at that point to be in the bus is a matter which goes beyond the matter of what laws we have and what we do with the Police Force but really speaks to how we build the society, or what kinds of attitudes are we trying to engender in our population generally. More particularly, in our young people who are in a better position to be raised and trained by us.

The Government will continue to work closely with the Royal Barbados Police Force to ensure that they are equipped with the resources to cope with any and all of the situations, both the traditional criminal kind and the newer offences against the law, Sir, with which we are unfortunately saddled.

Also an important component of that will be the work on remodeling and revamping the thinking of the society and the approach which society takes to a number of these issues. This will ensure that we have a society which is not only safe but also harmonious.

Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to speak on this Bill. As I study the Bill, I thought that the matter of the Royal Barbados Police Force and its members ought to be viewed from different perspectives.

I am considering the work of the police in Barbados and the relationship of the police in Barbados. The public sought to break this Bill down or the area which this Bill seeks to address into three categories, the relationship between the police and themselves, the relationship between the State and the police and the relationship between the police and public.
4.35 p.m.

As I study the Bill one thing is clear that the Bill in my opinion does not adequately address the relationship between the police and the State. I would say that to a large extent it deals with matters which would affect the police and themselves, how the police treat each other, how police treat the material and the documents which belong to the Government, which belong to the Force, which they should share among themselves, how they conduct themselves, on duty, those matters. I keep wondering if as I listened to the Leader of Government Business and as I studied the areas which this Bill seeks to address whether we are not addressing symptoms which are arising out of what I would consider to be a soured relationship between the police and the State.

To me, a number of these problems it would appear stem from the very low morale among members of the Barbados Police Force and I wonder if we are not at this stage putting the cart before the horse. A code of conduct for the police of this country is a very positive thing. Indeed we need a code of behaviour for all individuals who interact with the public and who in large numbers make up the workforce, profession, whatever discipline or career.

I believe, Mr. Deputy President, that were those issues which are at the heart of police concerns or which could be adequately addressed by the State the need for a number of these areas would not arise. For example, I am of the view from my conversations with members of the Police Force that there is a belief out there in the public domain that police are not adequately remunerated, that they are exposed to very high risk jobs in which limb and life are constantly at risk and that their remuneration is not commensurate with the level of risk to which these people are exposed.

There is also the belief out there and it is also my belief that the system of transfer, promotion, awards, incentives in the Police Force must be addressed soon and

very soon. For indeed we are noting a change in the profile of individuals who seek entry into the Police Force of Barbados. There are changes in two areas. One is a change that is affecting all careers, jobs and professions, that is, the negative elements of our society and our police are a part of the society and they bring along with them to the Force these negative elements, and they are feeling that out there in the Force.

The other element is that we are seeing the policeman out-brained. When I say "out brained", more police seem to be focussing on their academic achievements and the preference for law, that is, the practice of the legal profession, than those individuals who were attracted to the Force in the past not only because of want but because they believed that since they are providing security that they must be this special type of person. It makes one wonder how much of that is contributing to this problem of morale in the Police Force.

In discussion, because in my neighbourhood watch I seek to develop rapport with members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and I realise that that is creating a problem. There are jealousies there. There is the belief that if you want to get through fast in the Police Force and you want to get promotion and move up in the ranks of the Police Force, come out with some good "O" levels, decide that you will start to study law and you can be assured of a fast track in the Force. I believe this is a matter which must be addressed and those individuals who in addition to being physically strong that people can feel secure... I must admit that there are some individuals who are police that I wonder when I look at them if they possess not only the know-how but the physical ability to make me feel secure. That is the question now.

I believe these individuals because they possess not only the physical appearance but the skill, love, dedication and commitment to this career that Government must define a proper career path for these individuals. They must not believe that no longer can they reach the higher levels of this profession because they have not chosen to become academics or bright policemen as some people would say.

The hours of work also as members of the Police Force, I believe give cause for concern and maybe because the numbers seem not to be adequate they seem to have to work longer hours rather than shorter and we must recognise that this must make a very great sacrifice in terms of the quality which they contribute to the development of their families. They have children too and they have sons who need to have their mothers and their fathers at home as other people have sons and want their fathers to be there. There are also women in the Police Force and they have children too and they head households and they need to be there also for their children and we need to look also at this area of hours of work of members of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

I recognise that people when they are getting into something need to investigate it from the outset and understand the expectations but it seems to me that there are some additional burdens placed on members of the Police Force some which they did not expect because they thought their numbers would have been greater and therefore so much pressure would not rest on individuals.

I believe that if the State begins to address these areas which are of immediate concern to members of the Police Force these areas which we see here such as absenteeism, sick leave which we hear of, drawn-out sick leave, individuals not reporting for duty when they should or going off duty and not returning within reasonable time to perform their functions. These seem to relate to very low morale, high expectations not met by their employer and I appeal to the Government of Barbados to address these matters.

There is a little problem which I believe we need to look at, the special constable. I say a problem because when this idea of special constables was introduced it was meant to relieve police officers of the smaller duties in order that they could perform some of those more important or urgent duties. But how many duties do we have in this area?

I do not think that Barbadians are now able to distinguish the difference between a special constable and a regular member of the Royal Barbados Police Force and I believe it is necessary from the constable's perspective. I ask the question, is it fair that if they are not remunerated at the same level as the police and they are not entitled to whatever benefits, meagre though they are, that police get in the Royal Barbados Police Force should they be exposed to the same risks to which the police are exposed? I notice that the special constables are performing a number of regular police functions and this is a matter which I would like the Government of Barbados, the Attorney General to address. Should they lose their lives in active duty, I believe they are not even entitled to the military funeral which members of the Royal Police Force get which is really not enough for a policeman. The special constables are not even entitled to that, yet they are out there on the beat being exposed to these high risks which members of the Barbados Police Force have to suffer. So this is a matter which I would like to see addressed by the Government of Barbados.
4.45 p.m.

Now, I thought I needed to speak from that end as it related to the police. There are suspicions though in the mind of the public about police and the methods used in order to gain statements from members of the public who are accused of committing certain crimes. People wonder how an individual can be so sharp to plan and execute a crime and can so easily submit to an admission of guilt. The question is still out there in the minds of many people what methods are employed by members of the Police Force in order to get these statements of guilt by accused persons.

I thought I heard sometime in the past that Government planned to introduce tape recordings of statements of accused. I do not know whether we have as yet implemented that measure. I seek to get that matter clarified by the Attorney General, or his representative, if there is anyone here in the Senate who can represent the Attorney General in that area. If you say that you are innocent until proven guilty then I believe the records must show that methods used in order to get individuals to give statements to the police are not those methods which either force people to say "yes" when there is a "no", or that statements are prepared for them and then they are asked to sign them saying things which they never intended to say.

I believe that in order to remove this area of doubt from the minds of the general public, and in order for people to believe that when the police come before them to get a statement that they give the statement of their free will, then we need to have that matter dealt with. I wonder if the time has not come for not only audio recording but video recording of these statements when they are given. Technology has long caught up with us and passed and we still have not yet, so I am told, addressed this particular area.

I feel pleased with the work that the police have been trying in their community policing. I would want at this time to compliment the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force for trying to rebuild communities in Barbados because we have become in recent times such affluent peoples that we seem to have forgotten what it is like to be our brothers' and sisters' keepers.

I feel that it is by the encouragement and the insistence of members of the Royal Barbados Police Force that in a number of what people in Barbados prefer to refer to as the Heights and the Terraces that members of the Royal Barbados Police Force are seeking to bring some community life because there really is not much community life in those areas. Unfortunately, the spirit of the community seems only to come to life when something drastic happens to some member of these communities. I really want to commend the Police Force on the work that is being done in that area.

Also, it is a good thing to see how the police are trying to mend those fractures in the relationship between the youth and the police. I note with great care a number of policemen actually communicating and relating to school children as though they are their own. I think what that is doing is bringing some degree of comfort and safety to these children.

Even today as we complain and bemoan the fact that drugs are entering our schools, I think most of the police can build that trust and bond between themselves and our students that these children will feel free to disclose certain information to the police which will assist us in dealing with that problem of drugs in our schools. It is a very sad thing. It is something that should concern all Barbadians. Our future, the future of our nation, the hard work of parents today and parents of the past would all go for nought unless we are able to stem that very serious problem of illegal drugs and the negative effects which it could have on the minds of our young children.

Mr. Deputy President, as I welcome attempts by way of this Bill to address a code of conduct for the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, I appeal to the Government of Barbados to seek with great haste to address those problems which affect the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and which will contribute to poor work attitude and poor work ethic. This is not something that is rare or peculiar to policemen.

As I listened to Senator Farley as he commented on the increase in the absence in the workplace, I was saying to him aloud in an Aside that in countries in which employees share ownership plans have been implemented, that there has been great improvement in attendance at work, the quality of work and the number of hours which employees are prepared to put into the workplace because they feel a part of that workplace.

What the Government of Barbados must do, since policemen cannot own a part of the Police Force *per se*, since they cannot feel that they are shareholders, the Government must arrive at a system of recognition, not only in pay, but in other incentives which would make the policemen feel a real part of their Barbados and which would bring back that spirit of policing which I believe we are aware was present in the past. But as many things have changed over the years and we have sought to address those changes, we must accept that in this institution, the institution of the Police Force, that there would also be changes. I am saying that while we grapple with creative ways of dealing with those other challenges which face us in the society we must do so in the Royal Barbados Police Force. This country places so much emphasis on tourists and international investors that we can least afford not to place the same measure of emphasis on those individuals who must provide the type of security which would give Barbados the reputation for being a very secure place. We cannot do so by raising a 'big stick'. We really cannot. If I were a member of the Royal Barbados Police Force today, I would view this Bill as a 'big stick' because I have not seen those other measures which should be implemented and which should affect me positively. I have not seen them put in place.
4.55 p.m.

I want to say to the Attorney-General of Barbados that if he is very serious about policing and if he is really serious about improving the image of the Royal Barbados Police

Force, if he is indeed serious about sending a signal to people around the world that Barbados is a very secure place and that they can leave their own homes and come here in peace and comfort then he must as a matter of urgency address those areas which directly affect the lives of members of the Barbados Police Force and which spill over into the work and quality of work of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

With those few observations, Mr. Deputy President, I support this Bill.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.15 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.15 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy President, I would like to add my words to this Bill to amend the Police Act and state from the outset that it is not very often that I agree with the Opposition on anything but I wish to endorse a number of the sentiments expressed by Senator Thompson in relation to the Police Force.

Obviously there is the need within the ranks of the Police Force to look at all of the concepts as they deal with discipline and all of these things that people constantly make reference to regarding the police whether it be acts against the police themselves or other officers or acts committed against the public. Sir, I believe that we need to go deeper than that in terms of how we deal with the Police Force and how we look at the Police Force.

I am one who is of the opinion that the level of person that we are attracting into the Police Force may not be in all instances the best type of person suited for the job. Not because these people are not good people but generally I do not think that the Police Force is an attractive option given the other professions that are now available. If what the Minister of Education says is correct about the level about certifiable and uncertifiable people that are coming out every year out of school, I am wondering how large is the pool that you really have to choose from for the Police Force.

When I look at a number of things, particularly remuneration, I am one who was very surprised to see that a Sergeant of Police earns just over $2 500 a month. I am really very serious about this. I know of all the other allowances, the hazard allowances and the uniforms and everything else but when one looks at the level of remuneration within the Police Force one really starts to wonder about what kind of person is going to be attracted to a job as hazardous as being a police officer. I went further and looked at an Inspector of Police and he is earning under $3 000 a month.

It is a very serious issue that we are dealing with. I think I speak from a position of knowledge because my father was a policeman for 35 years so I do think I should have arrested Senator Boyce if he was around.

Asides.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Arrested him for impersonating a politician. If you really think about it, there must be some measure of how you deal in the future with the police. I think, Sir, too that being a policeman is a very thankless profession. Generally, there is a syndrome being created against any symbol of authority whether it be the teacher, the politician, whoever, there seems to be in this society some underlying theme about how we deal with anybody who is in a position of authority. I think the Police Force bears maybe the largest brunt of that reaction against any kind of authority figures. There were these two boys that were recently in some incident and there was some cutlass attack or stabbing on the police.

When you think about it most of our youth are not interested at all in looking up to any one in the disciplinary forces. I think that it is about time that the conditions that these people work under and what would initially attract a person to want to be part of these forces should be seriously looked at. I know that the retention of police officers seem to be a big problem with the Force. Anyone who gets into it seemingly gets into it because he could not get into somewhere else and just uses it as some kind of springboard to get on to something else.

Then there is an on-going fight within the ranks of the Police Force about this concept of academic qualifications versus police experience. There are lots of persons coming in who are studying law for example and there is also this thing about whether or not a man is a real policeman given the fact that he comes with a degree or one who goes on the beat and chases down criminals or whether or not a fellow in terms of technology, a good electrician, whether or not he is a real policeman. These are real conditions and circumstances within the Police Force that we must deal with.

The other thing is that the police obviously by the constitution cannot associate and therefore are not members

of the union. At the same time, I believe that because of all the hazards that it takes to become a police or to be in the Police Force that they need to be treated specially. I am not so sure that we are treating our police officers specially. We are not treating them apart and special from how we treat other people.

I believe that a special type of insurance needs to be created for the Police Force and for police officers. Some special type of insurance needs to be created as they are constantly under pressure. Check some of the statistics that come out of the Police Force and things to deal with policemen. The divorce rate of policemen is higher than most other professions in Barbados because they are constantly under pressure. Within the family environment he is never at home, he is always on call. I know that nurses and all these other people talk about being under similar types of pressure but I still do not believe that they have the same kind of pressures as the police.

I want, Sir, to deal with the levels of police officers that we have on this island. Within the ranks of the Police Force we have a ratio, I believe it is 1 policeman to every 200 citizens. There are times during the year particularly in the high tourist season when there are at times almost 50 000 or more people on this island. As a matter of fact, between December and April we increased the population of Barbados by almost twice what it is now.

Asides.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: I am not talking about the island constables and special constables. Really, how do we know the levels of police officers that are needed and are the disciplinary forces really under strain during those high peak periods and how do we deal with it? How do we deal with it? I believe that a sound research needs to be carried out to determine, on a consistent basis, the levels of police officers that are needed in Barbados. I am not so sure that we understand clearly or we have a clear picture of the number of police officers that are needed. Constant research needs to be carried out to determine the numbers of policemen that we need.

5.30 p.m.

Let me get back to the conditions, Sir. Because of all of the conditions that we have in the Police Force and creating that special environment that we need for them, I am not so sure either that a policeman needs to go the $33^1/_3$ years for retirement as all the other people in the civil service need to do. If under other circumstances we cannot create an environment which gives them some kind of special leg up let us reduce the amount of time that a man who is constantly under pressure has to work to 25 years as the years for retirement to get his full pension, not $33^1/_3$. The police officer is a man who is not off duty. We constantly keep them under pressure and we need to create the kind of environment that is going to attract them. We constantly need to look at improving the conditions.

Sir, the community policing aspect is one that comes into being by the setting up of these police outposts. I find that within the United States there are these police athletics leagues and whatever else in which policemen actually go into the communities and create sporting environments and build teams. I find however that a lot of Barbadians give a lot of lip service to being in concert with the police and talking with the police and obviously the information the police needs you can only get if the citizens are ready to provide it. So there has got to be some linkage but the linkage cannot just be the establishment of a mere police post within some community group or some community centre, it has got to go a lot deeper than that. We have got to be able to look at certain people within each community and try to integrate them in some way in how we deal with policing.

Now somebody talked today about the vagrants in St. Lawrence Gap helping to clean up beaches and whatever. I really think that we need to come up with some kind of concept of how we can integrate and deal with a lot of these vagrants or even would be criminals who do all these acts on the street into doing something that gives them a better understanding and a better environment to deal with the police. I think a lot of them could come and help clean up the police station or help clean up the police outposts. Do you want to punish a man or you want to create an environment in which that man is going to work with the police? Let us give him an opportunity to deal with the police at a level where he feels that the policeman is a human being and we do not create the impression that they are some inhuman Godzilla or something like that. We need to bring them closer to the society and we need to take the society more towards them.

I, Sir, have long asked and advocated that Barbados has a tourist zone police force. We got all kinds of opposition on this and it is something that happens in every tourism jurisdiction that I know about. In the Bahamas, in Puerto Rico, in Orlando, in Miami, in any area that the economy is based on tourism or tourism plays a very important part in the economy there is a tourism police task force. In Barbados we have never had one and I think, Sir, we need to create a police task force at the cutting edge of what is happening with people from other nationalities, language, instruction, being able to deal with people from different nationalities in terms of their cultures. Let us train a cutting edge type of police force that know how to deal with people. We just had an incident at one of these hotels where there was an attempted rape and a young police officer went in and it is alleged that the way in which he treated this person who as a matter of fact was not only a guest, she was a member of crew of an airline, as if she was the one who

encouraged this person. It was subsequently dealt with by a higher ranking police officer who understood how to deal with the sensitivities of people of different cultures and people in shock. But the initial reaction was that we need a police officer or type of policeman who can deal with people of different nationalities.

Even the uniforms the police wear, I have seen policemen in Orlando on mountain bikes, in cycling shorts and soft shoes. We believe that a policeman must be in long pants and hard shoes and all this type of thing, on the beach in the tropics. When they are outside we are really going to have to start to deal very seriously with a policeman who integrates into the society, a policeman who gets among the tourists, a policeman who can move, who is mobile enough to be able to deal with a man who is running away.

Aside.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: A policeman for all types. I do not have a problem with a policeman with dread locks, or a white policeman. We do not have any white policemen. We do not have any dread locked policemen. We need to have a policeman that really reflects Barbados, reflects the society, reflects what is happening within our society, reflects the cultural diversity that we have within our society. Why cannot we have a policeman like that? If we are going to operate in this society and operate in an environment that breeds the kinds of commercial environment that you hold dear, let us integrate everybody into the Police Force and into all parts of the civil service that is reflective of the cultural diversity that we have in Barbados. Do not let us reserve jobs only for certain people. Everybody needs to play a part in this.

Sir, I want to make my appeal again for this concept of the tourism police. Barbados needs a tourism police task force. They very seriously need a policeman who can deal with tourists who can deal with all the visitors that come to Barbados.

Sir, I want also again to make my appeal for the conditions under which police work. It is very important that we deal with it but at the same time running parallel to this we need to be able to create the kind of environment that is going to attract the right person to the Police Force and is going to create an environment that is going to keep them in the Police Force. They can see this as a real profession. $2 600 a month for a Sergeant or less than $3 000 a month for an Inspector, a little car loan here and there and little hazard allowance and a uniform allowance will not attract anyone of quality on a sustained basis to the Police Force of Barbados and we need to do something about it. I thank you.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Mr. Deputy President, I just want to make a few comments as I rise to support this Bill to amend the Police Act and I must say first of all that we have to compliment the Royal Barbados Police Force for doing an excellent job under the present conditions that exist within the Force. We are fortunate that the Police Force has not rapidly deteriorated over the last few years. Even though this year crime is down, crime has increased overall in the past few years. We know that the statistics show it is down this year over last year and we are very fortunate that the police have been able to come to grips with what is happening. I say that simply and in the light of what 2 previous Senators spoke on. I have to agree with Senator Thompson in most of what she said and I have to agree with Senator Lynch who just spoke. I agree with him in what he said on the sort of wages that the policemen get today and the type of pressure that they work under and I can say without a doubt that they are over-worked. Why are they over worked? You have to examine some of the reasons why and it was brought to my attention last year when I was at a meeting with some of the department stores in Bridgetown when they were talking about the security of Bridgetown over Christmas. I was meeting with senior police officers along with other businessmen and coming out of that discussion you could see clearly that in the past the Force had two 12-hour shifts, and coming out of that discussion, you can see clearly that in the past the Force had two 12-hour shifts. So it meant that they worked 12 hours. Then another group would come on for the next 12 hours and then there were those who were ill, sick, or those who were on vacation.

5.40 p.m.

But since then the Force has been divided into three 8-hour shifts and that has put a bigger strain on the Force because obviously there are the same amounts of police divided into three shifts and also those on vacation and those on sick leave. Now, it could be argued that the Force has taken some young recruits from time to time, but not enough to offset the 8-hour shift system that they have put in place, notwithstanding the fact that a number of units within the Force have been set up. For example, the Drug Unit and the Task Force and there are a few others that the Police Force themselves have identified.

Unfortunately, they have not identified the Tourism Police Task Force. However, the Police Force then has become very watered down and it has put a lot of pressure on the Officers. It leaves one to believe that we are fortunate under these circumstances that crime has not escalated and they still have a grip on things. But if we are not careful things are going to escape. If we are not careful, we are going to find ourselves in a lot of trouble. Then again, I heard it here and I am going to repeat, the level of people that are attracted into the Force, given the other professions and given the wages that they would apply to the Police Force for and given the risks, I have to say that people go into the Force only because they are not able to get jobs anywhere else. Because, any level-headed person is not

going to want to join the Force and work under those conditions for that meagre sort of salary and risk their lives on top of it. It is basically ludicrous.

Now, what we can identify with this watered down kind of Force, if there is a car accident and there are numerous cars on the road, and you call a police, you could stand up on the highway, two and a half and three hours to wait for a police. If you call the police when a burglar is entering into your house at 11.00 o'clock at night, the police may not come until 6.00 o'clock the next morning. That is a fact of life and the fellows are stretched out. Everybody runs down the Force and says, well you know the fellows are liming, the fellows are this, the fellows are that. The truth is that they do not have the manpower to man it.

Then having said all of that, there is the other side of the coin. I believe that there are some members in the Force, particularly the younger ones who have now come in, who suffer from what I call a BES and that BES is the "Blind Eye Syndrome". That is what I describe it as the blind eye syndrome because you will be walking down the road in Bridgetown, which I do every single day, and I hear people cursing on the road and I would see a Police Officer pass. He would hear that person using the most obscene language, which has become a common thing in Barbados and the police turn a blind eye and walk the other side. He would not even stand up and tell the fellow to stop. He would not stand up to that fellow and arrest him. They move away to the other side and that is not right. That is where the respect for authority fails when those fellows are out on the road and they are afraid to stand up and take a stand and say, "look, I am arresting you for cursing".

On the other hand these criminals go into the Court and they get reprimanded and discharged. Or sometimes they get a little $10 fine, which is another issue. The point is that they must arrest these fellows. They should not allow them to go without some form of correction. Then you take less than 100 yards between Nelson and Scotia Bank on Broad Street and you will see on any given day, especially when the ships are in, the same four or five vagrants who everybody else knows, walking up and down harassing tourists and fighting some of them. Some of them are elderly old ladies. No man with them in their company and these vagrants are harassing them. They trouble them, they want money, they want cigarettes and they want everything. I see it and everybody else sees it. People talk about it everywhere you go and we have the police with the BES, "the Blind Eye Syndrome". The police see it too, but they are prepared to close a blind eye and say, "well leave the fellow alone. Let him go on about his business." That cannot be right. Those things are wrong.

Sir, I have spent a lot of time with the Ministry of Tourism for the redevelopment of the Bridgetown area and if you would permit me just to step out a little bit here to identify Swan Street, I will come back to the police. What has happened here is that in meeting with the Ministry of Tourism, the first phase of the Government's redevelopment of Bridgetown, which overall is going to cost millions of dollars is starting with the Swan Street Development. As you and I are aware, the vendors have moved out of Swan Street and they are very happy in their new location and the merchants are also very happy. It is a two-fold marriage where both sides are very happy.

Asides.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Well, everybody is very amicable. Everybody is very happy. Let no one be fooled with the silly notion that sales have dropped in the stores. We are doing as well and some stores are doing better, because there was this thing that when the vendors moved, Swan Street was going to collapse. That is nonsense.

Swan Street will have arches at the top and bottom of the street identifying the area. All the utility polls, Senator Goddard could attest, at lunch we saw them all the wires look like a mass of spaghetti. All those utility wires are going underground and all the drainage is going underground. We are going to have sidewalks with cobbled stones. We are going to have the sidewalks done in a way for the physically challenged that wheelchairs can go up and down. We are having new lighting, benches and planting of trees. Eventually that street is going to be a pedestrian street. The deliveries for goods are going to be through the alleys.

Now, we need the police in Swan Street to make sure that these benches are not abused. That the trees are not pulled apart, that they do not urinate against the trees and this sort of thing. We have the opportunity to make Swan Street really good and the envy of the Broad Street stores. But we need the support of the police and on numerous meetings with the Ministry of Tourism, the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Holder and others, we have made an appeal to the police over and over again. We asked them to make sure that people do not park in the alleys and they still persist to part in the alleys. Again, they do the "BES". They see the cars parked in the alleys and they throw the "BES". They see it, they walk away and they do not care about it. They do not care about what happens in the alleys of Swan Street. Those alleys have to be kept clear in order for us to get deliveries and so on. This is an area, Sir, which the police have to come to grips with.

In winding up, the police that come into the Force make one wonder what the Training School is doing up there. I am not here criticising the School itself, but I feel the School could go further in training the Policemen and let them know what their job is. They come out on Broad Street and Swan

Street and they are like aliens, for lack of a better word. They are walking around in space as if they do not know what to do. The first time they hit Bridgetown, they are a nervous bunch of people with no form of confidence. And to develop that confidence they need a proper form of self-defence training. I would not say Martial Arts *per se,* but they need self-defence training because when you have that training no matter who it is, armed or unarmed you have confidence. When you have that confidence and you go on the streets with that confidence, it is then that you show the youth what authority is all about.
5.50 p.m.

My question today is one in which I would like to know the basic functions of the Barbados Defence Force. I basically see the Barbados Defence Force as a symbol, a show of marches on Remembrance Day, our local memorial day and Independence Day but I wonder why it is that since we need more manpower within the Police Force that the Barbados Defence Force cannot be incorporated with the Police Force.

This notion about training to kill, they are the same Barbadians from the same culture of Barbadians and they have a year or two of training and you are telling me they are trained to kill. They can come out and identify in certain areas. I am not saying that in all areas but they can identify themselves in certain areas to help the Police Force because the Police Force is in need of help. This country is in need of help because the moral decay in the society is increasing and we need to come to grips with it.

We need to have the Barbados Defence Force incorporated with the Police Force. We once had a situation where we were threatened on a Kadooment Day and the Government called out the Defence Force and the Defence Force came out and we had a beautiful Kadooment Day. There were no problems whatsoever, no violence, no fights and everybody said that they saw these fellows with guns and they felt secured. If you go overseas in Venezuela for example and I am not saying that we need to live in a military area but Venezuela is wild and uncouth with people, a bunch of hooligans and when you go into their malls they have soldiers with bayonets and they respect them.

I do not want a police state but I am saying that you have to come to grips with the problems facing this country. Do not just come in here and give lip service. The police have to identify the problems and deal with them.

In conclusion, the Police Force needs better working conditions and they need better wages. They have to have an incentive not only to work but an incentive that young people will want to say that they want to be a policeman not just come out of school and cannot find a job anywhere and they get somebody to pull a string or two and get them into the Force. That is not what we need in this place. We need to give them better working conditions. We have to remember what Senator Lynch said. I had it here as well. Barbados depends on tourism. We cannot allow any violence to go without correction in this country.

I spoke about Barbadians. I spoke about the length of time we have to wait when there is a car accident. I spoke about the burglaries when we call police but the economy which is important to all Barbadians involves tourists and I do not like the separation that I am Bajan and this is tourists. Without tourists, we Bajans suffer. So we have to think of them as well. Therefore I am calling for better wages for the Police Force. I am calling for better working conditions. I am told the Police Association is a union and I am calling for some Government base whether it is in the Attorney General's office where the police themselves can make recommendations for themselves that they can improve their conditions.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. Deputy President, I think this debate is significant in that it comes in this week which is the week the police have their celebrations. The theme for their week this year is: the Police, Public, One People.

I was very happy to be in church last Sunday when they began their celebrations and this was the theme throughout. I will not go into what the priests said but it was very relevant to the whole action of the Police Force today, indeed, within the church. Senators before me have already spoken at some length about the packages offered to police and indeed I would absolutely want to support the words of Senator Lynch and to a large measure the words of Senator Bernstein.

My reason for rising, Mr. Deputy President, is to focus on one area specifically inasmuch as the other areas have already been brought to light and ventilated quite fully. I do not believe in repeating for the sake of speaking but my concern is about the image of the police, image in many different respects.

I would want to look first at the image of the police in uniform versus out of uniform. In today's Force there are a set of plain clothes policemen.

Mr. Deputy President, the Asides down here are quite terrible. I wish you would keep them under control. I am just begging for a little assistance, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: At times I do allow a certain amount of cross-talk in order to relieve the tension of the Chamber among Members but if the Honourable Senator requires absolute silence I will ask Honourable Members

now to obey the Standing Orders and let us have absolute silence so that the Senator can concentrate on what she has to say.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: I might put myself in trouble with that one now.

Mr. Deputy President, the plain clothes policemen. I speak particularly to this because recently we had occasion to call on the Police Force to come to assistance in my workplace and the response I will deal with on another occasion but in any case the policemen who came were not in uniform. Indeed, when one of them appeared at the door I was not sure who the person was. We have in our area of work within the environs of Bridgetown problems with all sorts of persons coming at all sorts of hours. I would not want to call them vagrants but persons who as you look at them you can see that you would not want to invite them into your place because you do not know what their actions would be.

However, some person arrived at the door and there was another policeman already on the inside and he acknowledged that he was one of his colleagues. I was really quite taken aback because while I realise that oft-times in the execution of duty you need to appear as one of the boys if you are working in an environment where the uniform would be a hindrance rather than an asset, I was more than a little concerned because not only was the image of this young officer negative in his attire but in his manner.

Now I would not want to dwell on how he looked in his clothes because they did not look clean. They were ill-fitting and his body language was almost like that of one of the boys or young women who would come to the door to harass, so to speak.

Mr. Deputy President, while I agree in part that the plain clothes policemen definitely have their place in the execution of their duties, I think that in their position they need to be able to assess the situation for what it is and present the correct image even if the garb they wear is not the traditional uniform or Sunday-go-to-Meeting. Sometimes they look really good in their plain clothes.

So that is an area that I would like to see come under consideration when the training for these officers takes place because if that other policeman had not been there I certainly was not going to let that young man in. He would have had to have shown me identification. So the image is very important because if our police officers are sending negative images in many different areas we will have a problem.

If we are suggesting that we want discipline to be of a high order you cannot have persons who appear not to be disciplined in their manner in terms of approach and in terms of their person. I remember when I was growing up and I suppose that would apply to many of us in this Chamber the policeman was the person you looked up to. If you saw a policeman coming you would straighten up. There was no jay-walking. You did not want to throw gum on the street for the policeman to see because you knew you were going to be brought up correctly because I remember feeling proud and positive that there was somebody who could discipline me. Not that I was a bad child, of course, but the image was different in the bygone days and I would want to see that positive image displayed by policemen.
6.00 p.m.

Senator Bernstein talked about training them for self-defence with martial arts but he made reference to alternative training as part of their curriculum. I would want to see the area of interpersonal relations introduced into the curriculum as well because I see the Police Force as a profession. While I will agree that the salary might not be what it should be and a lot of the package is really less than persons would want to be associated with in terms of their daily living – Senator Lynch spoke on that at length and I really would want to support that as I have already said before. I would want to see the image changed so that the profession becomes one of choice as opposed to one that they are just doing this because there is nothing else to do and it is going to be a stepping stone.

The other area I would want to look at, Mr. Deputy President, is the public relations of the Force which, again, I think is tied to image in part. Senator Bernstein spoke about the response when one makes calls to the Police Force and there were other Asides which were happening at the time which, perhaps, highlighted the reasons why they did not come when called. Whatever the obstacle is, it needs to be addressed. If it is a problem of acquiring vehicles, personnel or whatever to answer the call, it is the responsibility of the public relations of the Force to make sure that the public at large understands the problem.

Oft-times one would get the impression, if you do not know, or one would just assume that they are just liming, or hanging out, or do not want to take you on, or they only go to calls if they recognise the name of the person, or the person is what would be considered "big up in this country" and that the small man feels the police do not come to him because, because, because, and we could go on and on. It is up to the Police Force's public relations to address that as one of the areas of concern.

The other area, Mr. Deputy President, was introduced in small measure. But too often as we go about the highways and byways of Barbados and you meet and sit somewhere and have conversation, or have a beverage or whatever with your friends and so, people will continue to make slurring comments about the police and their involvement in the drugs trade.

There are many people in Barbados who believe that the drugs trade is as it is because the police turn what Senator Bernstein refers to as the BES, the blind eye syndrome. I do not know if there is any truth in that or not but the point remains if the public believes that is the case in their minds, perception is real, so perception is everything. It is up to the public relations within the Force to try and change that image because it can only continue to do us more harm than good because the police would then be slurred as persons might say: "Do not mind them. They are only big nasty 'druggers'." I am not saying, Mr. Deputy President, that is the case but that is the opinion that many people in this country have about the Police Force. That is not good enough because whether we want to acknowledge the necessity for discipline or not I believe in discipline.

Every one of us, I believe, in this Chamber was disciplined in one way or another, whether it was by the Police Force, within our households, that is where I think most of the discipline came, and I would not want to go down that line this evening because that is a whole and entire other debate, but if we are going to really continue to think about the police and the public as one people we have to look a little bit in our homes as well, how we discipline ourselves on the first hand, and how we discipline our offspring and for those of us who do not have offspring, how we discipline our relatives, our nieces, our nephews and our Godchildren because their image too is what is going to determine how far they are going to go in life or if they are only going to go as far as Glendairy Prison where we all know the outcome of that when one comes out from there. The public relations of the Force, I think, is sadly lacking in that regard.

I remember very recently an instance where the Force came under heavy criticism from the women of this country and I myself too because whilst we in this Chamber do not use the media as a guide in our debates, one could not help but notice what appeared to be the brutal treatment of women by the police in terms of the searches to their bodies, *et cetera.*

Now, it is alleged, let me say, that the police did certain things. Again, the public believed it was true. The perception was there. Coming after the fact and saying "No, it was not so" does not really help. People have already made up their minds. The feelings do not bother me. The fact is I have already made up my mind. We as politicians certainly hear that often enough. People will tell you do not worry with the facts. They have already made up their minds so do not ask them for any vote.

We know that perception really can either make or break in so many areas of life so I would not want the Police Force to continue to have to go and do damage control. I think it is better to do positive public relations. The only way that can happen is to make sure and put systems in place to ensure that your personnel give the right image, send the right signals, open their eyes and look to see what is what, and make statements accordingly. Particularly in this day and age, Mr. Deputy President, I find our Police Force is a whole lot younger than in bygone days. Right away, if you have a young person, as they say, who has not lost his mother's features yet, well you would full well know when you are getting somebody who is big, tough and, perhaps, even rough, people would want to have some cuffs or come on a one to one with that young policeman, even young policewomen.

I was so pleasantly surprised in church last Sunday to see the varied ages and sizes of the Police Force and this is where Senator Bernstein's comment about self-defence would indeed come in handy. I believe the Force is a place where any Barbadian, as Senator Lynch said, of any colour, creed, whatever, should feel that they can go and work in that environment having received the proper training in all areas of the profession and that would include image, public relations, vim and vigour to go out there and do the job at hand.

It must be accompanied, Mr. Deputy President, with all the other assets that would go to make the job attractive and job therefore of first choice because a country cannot survive without the strong arm of the law. I would want to use "strong arm" at this time because in these days we are not living in a fairytale land. It is my firm belief that if we do not try and institute these things at that level here and now, things could only get worse, and none of us in this Chamber and, certainly, none of us as Barbadians who would want to see Barbados continue to grow and develop in every arena, we must have our Police Force equipped so that the profession is one of first choice and not the profession by chance just to get by with a salary for the time being until better can be done.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I wish to say at the very outset that I do not support and will not support the amendment as conveyed in this instrument before the Chamber. I take the view, Sir, that if we were dealing with an act to punish the police, then this might be something on which I could speak or on which I could give a point of view. I share the view of Senator Thompson that this is absolutely one-sided and it does not speak to progressiveness especially coming as it does less than a week after, under the distinguished leadership of the Prime Minister of the country and with Sir John Stanley Goddard signing on behalf of the private sector organisations of Barbados, and with your humble servant signing on behalf of the working people of Barbados, we were able to sign a Protocol speaking to progressiveness, speaking to new approaches, speaking to new systems of doing business.
6.10 p.m.

we are going to be able to deal with problems of policing. Let us build into this instrument empowerment mechanisms so that a policeman or policewoman who goes out in the street feels that this document will give him or her that kind of protection that he or she wants.

I am still in the news in New York. They told me yesterday that in carrying out their chases the police had caused a number of people to be injured and the private sector Attorneys took the matter and challenged it in the courts. The judges in an effort to empower police workers to be able to fight crime more manfully... The judges in an effort to empower police workers to be able to fight crime more vigorously, the Judges ruled that when a police is giving chase and there is an accident, that person cannot be considered to be criminally liable.
6.20 p.m.

Now, I do not know the law, Sir, and you will forgive me as a lay person for referring to it. I do not refer to whether it is good law or bad law. I refer to it as a mechanism by which the society as a whole recognises that policemen and policewomen in this society need a helping hand, need a hand up to pull down the punishments and suspensions and discrimination and any other form of punishment that the Commissioner may seek to hand out. This is what bothers me about this, Sir.

Mr. Deputy President, I am not for a moment saying that a policeman or a policewoman should be allowed to violate rules or violate laws. I hope that nobody gets the impression that I am a supporter of any behaviour that is not 100% committed to hard work, to productivity, to honesty, to integrity. I want to make that point and make it very strongly. I am not making out a case for those members of our community who do not wish to contribute. I am making out a case for our amending a bit of legislation in 1998 and needing at this time of our experience as a people to build into it a total programme – and not only a programme for discipline and for punishment.

I say, Sir, that this particular bit of legislation bothers me because it comes right after we had occasion to take note of the fact that the Commissioner of Police, in addressing the Constitutional Review Committee of this country, which is now concluding its report, wanted to make a presentation. Put it down to the effect that the Commissioner of Police had to have absolute power to decide whether he would retain a worker who is a policeman after he suspended or he fired that person. The Police Commissioner decided that if the person should be reinstated he must retain power to decide whether he agreed with the Commission or not.

It strikes me as a very bad movement at a very good time in our existence, at a time when Barbados is going forward in a position where governance is being seen in completely different terms, the autocracy is being removed, the level of consultation, tripartism, total commitment, total quality, full involvement, are all part of the new ethos of this society, in such terms and in such circumstances for us to be going back to a police punishment act as I call this piece of legislation is a position that we must most definitely say "no" to and I will be asking my colleagues in this Chamber not merely to say "aye" and "nay" but to say where they stand as individuals on this piece of legislation because I feel, Sir, that we have got to be able to say to people in this Chamber that as a Senate of Barbados we are not a reflection of anything else anywhere in Barbados: we are thinkers able to see a picture at the statesman level, and we are able to represent the concerns in a way that other people may not see from other positions of commitment, or other focuses and other levels of concern.

I am of the view, Sir, that what we can best do is to look to an instrument in reviewing this matter which, at the same time that it seeks to deal with problems which we have, can move beyond those problems to deal with a lot of the things that other persons have spoken about in this institution. That gives me an opportunity, Mr. Deputy President, to refer to some things which were said by some of my colleagues.

I am sure, Honourable Senators that they are, that they could not have meant in their words what would have come through to the uninitiated. But what came through to the uninitiated such as I am, Sir, was on the one hand, I am sorry the Senator is leaving his position, that what you want in this country is a sort of policeman for the tourist only. I do not know if he understands that these fields and hills beyond recall are still our very own, and that for us in those circumstances, we cannot want a police force that would be for the tourist, but when your grandmother, or your sister, or your aunt, or your cousins have their problems you do not need to bother about those. I am sure, as I said, Mr. Deputy President, that Honourable Senators would not have intended that; but for the uninitiated as I am, the impression would have been given.

The Honourable Senator Odle did say that the police are perceived and she was careful, Mr. Deputy President, to tell you, not that I believe it, Sir, but people believe so and that what is paramount is the impression. So you cannot say it is good for the goose but not for the gander. So when you speak in terms that are critical and you point your gun in terms that are critical, remember the finger that points in the one direction points back in the other direction to yourself. That is all I am saying to you. I am saying we must not make statements, and I said already, Sir, that I do not believe they meant it, but we must not make statements that give the impression that Barbados can be divided into policemen for

Barbadians and policemen for tourists. The only area in which we can do that is where we decide land for Barbadians and use of land for tourists. That is what we could say. But we cannot say that, Sir, for the police. What we have to be able to recognise, Sir, is that in addressing this subject we have to ask ourselves what is the purpose of a piece of legislation and of this amendment. I do not know what the purposes are, and there would be an aim somewhere; but it maybe speaks to the amendment and I have looked very carefully but I have not seen anywhere where there is; in the purpose of that piece of legislation, the intention to strengthen the disciplinary code as it relates to police persons in order that they may more effectively carry out their duties.

I must therefore conclude that the entire Act, Cap 167 is being amended in as comprehensive a fashion as the framers of this legislation intended. If, Sir, they intended this comprehensive review, then the question is, why have they stopped only at the point of discipline?

I could go on, Sir, but I think I have made the central point that I wanted to make. I want to say to you, Sir, that I look forward to having a piece of legislation which will address the concerns raised by others about police persons. I strongly believe, as Senator Lynch said, that police persons are working under conditions where they need to be able to retire before they get to age 65 because they have to have an opportunity for using their reflexes when they are younger. The stress factor in this area is different. There are other jurisdictions within the region where 25 years is a reasonable level of time to qualify for retirement. This seems to me to be reasonable.

I take the point that there cannot be very much that is desirable in a Force where, if people die in the line of duty, to tell their relatives that at least they are taken care of because there is an instrument for pension or there is an instrument to continue that family in its life after the policeman has passed on. There has got to be and there ought to have been within this comprehensive review something that addressed the dangers which there are for police persons but there is not. No reference here whatever to the very dangerous circumstances in which policemen and police-women are being forced to work.
6.30 p.m.

There ought to be a recognition as well that viewed against the wider cross-section of jobs there are in this society, that there is a certain pressure on persons to join the Force not necessarily by choice but as an avenue for escape and therefore, we have to be able to provide opportunities for people to want to take that career as one which they could see as providing possibilities.

This means that we have to look again at the police structure and we have to ask ourselves whether, within that structure, there are enough avenues for personal advancement, or whether that advancement will come only to those people who are able to write an examination at Cave Hill University quite satisfactorily.

What about those other people who are equally competent but who may not be as skillful in putting their sentences together that they do not split the infinitive and ensuring that there is proper balance in the sentence so you use your adverbial adjuncts and your adjectival adjuncts in such a way that they do not cause a level of disruption in the rhythm of the language.

What exactly is it that they are looking for in those persons that we want to make...those individuals that will follow a career in the Royal Barbados Police Force. And what is it that we want to do in terms of creating a structure and a relationship between the Commissioner of Police, between his Deputies and his Assistants and with the rank and file that he will have?

These are important subjects that are sadly lacking within the texture of this particular piece of amendment. It is like a piece of garment, Mr. Deputy President, that has failed to put in all of the elements that the creators of that cloth wanted to have within the fabric. It is not too late, Sir, and I would like to urge on the Honourable Leader of the Chamber that it would be desirable to hold this piece of legislation back so that we could come back with a document more complete, more fully representative of the needs and aspirations and total developmental programmes that the Police Association, the Commissioner of Police and, I believe, the respected and Honourable Attorney-General would have for this country.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy President, I want to make my contribution to the Bill before us, entitled the Police (Amendment) Act, 1998 and to say that I listened very carefully to the last contribution made by Senator Trotman who obviously has brought another aspect to bear on this debate as it was going so far.

I want to say at the onset that even before Senator Trotman spoke, I found myself making certain notes against clauses of the Act which were causing me some concern. I refer especially to one which is under subsection (3)(s) and it is to do with "neglect of health" for instance and it says,

> "a member of the Force shall not without good and sufficient cause, neglect to carry out any instruction of a police medical officer or other medical practitioner or while absent from duty on account of sickness, commit any act or adopt any conduct calculated to retard the return of that officer to duty."

This is an extremely stuffed clause and I have a double question mark against it. Where would the origin of

something like that come? So I am not surprised with his especially keen ear for matters of this type, or his keenness for matters of this type.

Senator Trotman was able to even delve further into this Bill to bring aspects before this Chamber which none of the Senators who spoke before would have wanted to deal with or indeed allude to. That is especially the overriding factor that here we are in a situation in Barbados where on the one hand the Minister of Home Affairs and Attorney General who is responsible for the Police Force is saying that crime is down.

Now if crime is down this must be as a result of better work on the part of the police. Even if it is to the extent that their social programme has been able to penetrate households in this country or to the extent that our people now think less violently. If crime is down therefore, Sir, we should be seeking to praise the police or to credit the police with some of the kudos for this success.

We are in a situation where we are getting mixed signals. But of course, this is not strange coming from the Barbados Labour Party, Sir. On the same Sunday that everybody has been referring to, I was able to listen to an address, I believe it would be the...I call it the Unionist in the Police Force, that is my short term for it, it is the head of the Police Association. I think it is a misquote and I think I have the right name, Ms. Judy Forde...

Aside.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: ... Secretary of the Police Association, I think she was deputising for the President. Sir, she made the point that in truth and in fact things are not well in the Police Force. She began then to quote a litany of woes in respect of, and again, Senator Trotman and the other Senators mentioned some of these things, the failing to provide adequate insurance coverage for a police officer, given the hazardousness of jobs that he or she is doing. The fact that they were at the time laying a wreath, I believe on two fallen brethren and the wreath was about all that the Police Force as an institution, would have been able to hand to the remaining families of these fallen heroes in respect to the duty that they performed.

The point being that there is no arrangement and Senator Barker, as the only Minister of Finance in here, will be able to tell us whether this is true or not...
6.40 p.m.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: I am rising on a point of order. I am not the Minister of Finance and he knows that. He is deliberately misleading the House. I want him to withdraw those offensive remarks.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT. I ask the Honourable Member to withdraw that remark. Senator Barker is not the Minister of Finance.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, Senator Barker is not the Minister of Finance. Senator Barker is the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, a junior Minister of Finance as he is often referred.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: There is no such title in Barbados.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: I do not know if he has even acted as a Minister of Finance in truth and in fact but he might have been from time to time. The point I want to make is that he would be in a unique position to tell this Chamber when he speaks because he has not spoken on this Bill as yet, instead of interrupting presentations by other Senators to tell this Chamber exactly what financial arrangements have been made.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. I take offence at that remark. I did not interrupt the presentation of anybody. It is reflecting, Sir, on the Chair if the Chair would allow me to interrupt another Member's presentation.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you. The Honourable Member must stick to the Resolution and do not create confusion at this time.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Confusion is already there.

Sir, the Honourable Senator is in the unique position of being the only person who can tell us with any authority if any special arrangements have been made in terms of financial arrangements for the families of these men. That is all the point I am trying to make, nothing more than that.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Senator must now stick to the Resolution and stop creating stupid things. The Senator has not spoken. If he wants to speak he will speak. You must stick to what is before the Chamber.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy President, the signals being sent to the Barbadian society as a whole have got to be carefully examined and I am saying that if on the one hand we are saying that the police in Barbados are doing so well, that crime is down, the statistics on crime say that it is down in spite of all we read and hear in the newspapers and in the Press and all that we encounter, all the increased violence that we encounter on a daily and nightly basis in this country, the statistics on reported crime is down. That redounds to the success of the work of the Police Force.

To hear an executive of the Police Association on Sunday indicating that things are so rough in the Police Force to the extent that she can even say that the police stations which we are hearing boasts about in public all the time about being repaired, are in no state for use by police officers and that it is a put-on and the outsides have been painted – those are her words not mine – but the interior has not been attended to.

That is the point I want to make, the double signals. If the Senator is in a position to clarify the double signals that are being sent in the society, I believe it is our duty as spokesmen for various departments of this country to come out and clarify them. I make no bones about that position, Sir, and I think we have more often to take stock and listen to the meat of the criticism or the comments that are being made.

We have a situation where the post of temporary police officer was created for specific purposes almost to an extent to deal with the situation which was referred to by Senator Lynch – casual policing where a temporary police officer who is not required to have the qualities of a permanent police officer who would be an island constable placed in this new position would deal with the thing that Senator Lynch referred to. Things like the beach beat, interacting with the tourism belt where there were harassment difficulties and things like this, trying to be a first hand on that kind of thing. That situation has changed and we see those officers now taking part in what could be termed direct everyday policing.

I am saying that that also brings into question what we are doing specifically and what are we contributing by the way we arrange things for the problems in the police force.

Those temporary postings and those temporary special constables are now facing the same dangers as the permanent constables and the other officers of the Police Force. I deal with the police all the time, especially at Oistins and I want to say that for the most part our relationship is an excellent one. I have always been able to extract positiveness but even at Oistins' Police Station which is a new station this Administration for the last four years has done nothing to maintain that station in a fit and proper way for people to work far less for visitors to come to make complaints.

To an extent it could be part of the system because one of the things that strikes you when you drive into Oistins Police Station is the presence of so many derelict vehicles as though that is the centre for the preservation of evidence or something like that. All these vehicles are dumped there in the car park and there is nowhere even for visitors far less the police to park their vehicles.

So, Sir, even in our method of pursuing crime we might be contributing to the state of affairs which makes the environs of the police officers to do their work not necessarily as decent and as comfortable as it should be.

On the question of evidence when evidence is being taken we hear it referred to by the legal minds all the time.

Certain remarks made by SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I have heard numerous attorneys in this country refer to the methods required under the law. It is nothing that the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party created. It is a pattern which we have followed that has created a cumbersomeness and a bulkiness about taking evidence that has made life extremely difficult. So these police officers are bogged down.

From the time a report is laid at 6 o'clock in the afternoon it probably takes the officer the rest of the night to complete the requirements under the law. No wonder, therefore, Sir, that you have a situation where the police constantly cry out for more police to complete and carry out their work. No wonder the citizens of this country continue to cry out that when misfortune afflicts them they have to wait for hours for police officers to attend their case.

I have had situations where fire victims have not been able to enter a partially destroyed home for three days waiting for a police officer to take evidence while another police officer of lower rank was standing guard over the property and being changed over that three-day period. Something has got to be drastically wrong if we can change an officer over a three-day period while we wait for one particular person who will then more or less unlock the key to the vault which has been guarded for the last three days. This is what we call ordinary citizens and these are the ones that we need to speak to in these Chambers.

There are other persons and again they were referred to who have a way of getting things done and therefore a shortage of police or an abundance of police does not affect them. It is the majority of the persons in this society whom we have to deal with and make things easier for.

Sir, we talk about our police and Senator Odle spoke to the incident where a police officer appeared at her door out of uniform and therefore made it difficult for her to recognise his business. I am saying to you, Sir, that we need to address the whole question of our policing in respect to training in that officers if they are going to attend incidents are required by their training to know that the first thing you do is to produce an identification badge. The same television which we watch all the time demonstrates that that is how it is done. From the time you enter a premises you demonstrate that you are not there to loiter, your business is that of a

police officer, constable, sergeant or whatever and you show your badge. That gives you security, Sir, as the officer, and it gives the premises which you are entering comfort that they are dealing with the law because these are funny times we live in and we require to have these precautions put in place up front. These are the kinds of changes which we should be addressing today.
6.50 p.m.

I was reminded, as I listened to Senator Trotman's presentation, of what really is the need to rush this piece of legislation at this time and why we cannot wait, as he said, to look at a much larger and all encompassing piece of legislation to deal with the whole question of modern-day policing.

We have had to make changes in the past. There was a time when our policemen did Immigration duty. There was a time when our policemen did licences and took out people for drivers' tests and things like that. They do not do it now, so we have constantly to be updating the practice of the Police Service. There is no need, therefore, that we should not be at this time looking at a comprehensive change in the Police Service based on the many pleas that are made by the police officers on the one hand be it for more officers or more money. We have all demonstrated the fact that the wages are certainly insufficient, that a sergeant at $2 600 could hardly be considered a satisfactory wage, that our inspectors need to be better paid, that we look at pensions for police officers, pensions for injury in the line of duty and we look at the question of possibly early retirement. All these can be looked at as a package to make the question of discipline, if that is a special requirement, make the whole approach to the Police Act much more palatable and much better appreciated by the ones looking at the situation.

If we have a situation where we are going to pull out only the disciplinary aspects of the Bill, or we are going to try to introduce only a disciplinary code this is only part of the problem in the Police Force, and as much of this Bill is dealing with the discipline in the Police Force, there are police officers who will tell you stories of woe about their situation in regard to the treatment by those who administer the discipline.

I had a strange concern when I dealt with the Bill too that at this time, and I cannot boast of being trained in any special skills in policing but, certainly, this Bill appears to give the Commissioner certain powers to discipline officers which are extremely wide, to put it mildly, Sir.

In this day of consultation, one would have thought we were looking at some kind of a tribunal which could be quickly brought together, be it the Commissioner, a Magistrate, and one other person, whoever it be, so that the police officer who is being disciplined could feel that sense of comfort that at least his or her case might be evenly heard.

I do not think it is fair to expect the person being disciplined to feel comfortably disposed to the fact that the only judge and jury at his or her hearing will be the Commissioner who in the first instance is the one he believes he has wronged. It just does not mesh. Therefore, the Bill has its shortcomings and in spite of the fact that there might be need for a disciplinary code, I think it is useful for the Government of the day and for the Minister of Home Affairs to appreciate the interventions that are being made in this regard and to probably look again at some aspects of this particular legislation or, indeed, they might want to ensure that a more encompassing piece of legislation will follow very, very soon.

Sir, I want to indicate very clearly that this particular Bill, though it has its place, cannot be seen in isolation because we would be in a position where we are saying that the only case to be made in the Police Force today is one which there is a requirement for more discipline within the Force. The truth is that there are as many complaints within the rank and file of the Force about the way they have been treated, and we know for ourselves. We do not have to call names because most of these names are very sensitive. The Police Force by its nature is a very sensitive organisation and therefore we cannot think of dealing with such a sensitive organisation by calling names. We experience the complaints all the time. The police are our families. They are not aliens. They are not tourists. They are not visitors to the island so we experience their pain. We experience the politics, for instance, of the Police Force and we hear these officers when they complain.

I think what we need is for the Barbados Labour Party Administration to perk up and listen to the views that are being expressed on this Side, listen to the fact that they have created the chasm. You are the ones who have said you have created all these beautiful things, this panacea for the Police to work in. You have created these lovely police stations. You have polished, painted, retiled and furnished and that is not true. The police are not saying that. You have gone about and said you were walking with money. Money is dripping out of your pockets, $700 million in foreign exchange. Pay the police. That is the point I want to make. If there is all this money available in the country why are we showing such restraint in an area of such sensitivity, an area which impacts on our economy in a very real way? Because where there is a breakdown in law and order eventually there will be a breakdown in society and eventually there will be a breakdown in our economy because when the tourists are harassed in Dover or when the tourists are harassed at Sandy Lane, they do not come back or when the locals are badly treated or when the crime is perpetuated against the locals, we are in trouble.
7.00 p.m.

We have a situation which I fear for Sir, in the Maxwell area where a couple of months ago we had a group

of persons who actually had to chase down a criminal themselves. I say that that should not be repeated in this country.

Asides.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: I thank God they did not catch him because we would then discover how difficult a situation we are putting our citizens under. We must make sure that we provide the kind of policing that does not require our citizens to move into any kind of vigilante groups. That is what they were called at the time, Sir. We do not need that, Sir. We need to nip that kind of activity in the bud. We need to ensure that there is no need for our citizens to take the law into their own hands and try to carry out these kind of activities which are set out very clearly for the police to deal with.

Sir, it means that we need more policemen and it means that we need to pay our police better. If they are under protest – they did not say they are under protest so this will be an assumption on my part because they are not being paid well enough but certainly from the salaries we have heard they would have every right to do that. If you look at the situation in Bridgetown, there is chaos in Bridgetown. Somebody referred to the fact the police have a blind eye syndrome. He spoke about people not stopping at street lights and cursing for the police to hear etc.

We have a situation now even in terms of public crossings. The policymakers have almost made it clear that it does not matter. As a matter of fact they say that traffic works better without the lights to such an extent that when they turned on the lights at Redman Village two weeks ago, they had two collisions almost instantaneously. People were shocked because the driver did not know how to deal with a light.

Sir, on Broad Street, you drive up Broad Street...

Asides.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: The police are no different from the society in which we live. They are drawn from that society. Drive through Broad Street now and as a driver you will encounter people who walk from side to side. When you think about it, they must, Sir, because the crossing at the top of Broad Street which people used to use decently has not been working for about one whole year and nobody cares. The police are powerless.

The first thing that the citizens who the police goes to arrest will say, well skipper, I could not cross up there, the lights up there are not working, so I crossed down there and I will carry that defence to the Supreme Court if I were charged for jay walking. I would take it to the Privy Council, that the lights are not working so I am free to cross wherever I feel most comfortable crossing.

Sir, I therefore want to indicate that the legislation before us is one which requires careful examination. I would urge the Barbados Labour Party Government through its spokespersons to take back to the policymakers the positions that have been taken in here and draw from those views and seek to improve the entire Police Act as it stands and not only necessarily to deal with the aspect of discipline as we are doing here today.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy President, I am almost deaf now. Senator Boyce has laid his claim in thunderous tones.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy President, I have a difficulty when I sit and reflect because all of us are Barbadians. When I reflect on the passionate way in which Senator Boyce expressed his view. To think that we in Barbados have very short memories. I am going to give the police some licks today and I am going to give them some praise because our Police Force is being drawn from a society where a lot of our morale values have deteriorated. Likewise, in any profession we will find some that are excellent workers, some that are good role models and we are going to find some that do not deserve anything. I almost used a Barbadian expression to express that but it would have been a clean one, Sir.

Mr. Deputy President, Senator Boyce's memory is the shortest. I sit here and I do not hear all the things or I do not understand all of them because I am not a legal person but I have a tremendous difficulty when I know that prior to 1976 there were difficulties out there in the Police Force as there were in many other sections of the Government and little or nothing was done to ease the situation. In the 1970s and 1980s systems were put in place in Barbados to assist the police officers and there were criticisms left, right and centre. Between 1986 and1994 the situation with law and order in Barbados fell to the lowest ebb and few people at Government level at that time of the Democratic Labour Party's regime said little or nothing. We even heard that there were no gangs when we knew that young people were out there recking havoc in our society. Little or nothing was done to ease the situation. The Justice Minister did his little bit but where was Senator Boyce and many others who should have been out there trying to make a case for where Barbados should go in the future. Very little or nothing was said.

Mr. Deputy President, our police officers comprise individuals from within this society who are our brothers, our

sisters, our husbands, our uncles, our grandparents because it is a small society and we are all closely knit as a family. I would hate to know, Mr. Deputy President that we continue hearing on a daily basis and seeing on our national television and in our print media problems in the society where police at this point in time are seen as the ones who are disliked most by nearly all the young people and most other people in society.

It is not only the people who are involved in crime that are perceiving the police as their biggest enemies. It is because of a lot of cultural penetration and songs like 'what the hell the police can do' and other expressions that are used to criticise policemen and to help to destroy the relationship that should have been in existence as would have been the case in our time where we have always held the police in very high respect.

I am happy for the Police Out Posts and for the resident beat officers as would have been mentioned before. I respect the role that they are playing in our society at this point in time to help to revalue the Police Force and the relationship that was in existence in the past. Mr. Deputy President, there is tremendous deterioration in the attitude of many of our police officers and it leaves a lot to be desired. I have passed through Bridgetown and a police officer in uniform hissed at me. I did not know I looked so good that a young police officer would have hissed at me. I turned around, Mr. Deputy President and told him, you are supposed to be protecting me. How dare you be so disrespectful to be hissing at an individual. I am not looking at status now but that is not the right way. They must be more professional. We cannot come in here like Senator Boyce does and target or point at one isolated case because that was an isolated case with me. To keep saying that all the police are bad, I do not think that way at all. I have a lot of respect for police but what I know is that as a result of their alleged involvement in things like the ZRs that it has created quite some confusion amongst the travelling public of Barbados because it is alleged that some of them have their own ZRs and people who do not have connections get reported and others do not.

When you are travelling and you hear the kinds of negative comments that are meted out to them, it leaves a lot to be desired. But if you do not know then you would want to believe that what you are hearing is true.

There are other situations and Senator Farley mentioned them but I live on embarrassment street, I said so the last time that I spoke and I have been put in the most embarrassing position with some police officers because some of them throw their weight around like some teachers and principals do, like some nurses and matrons do, like some attorneys do, like some unionists do, like some secretaries do, like some tellers in the banks do. We must make them aware that there are regulations that must be put in place and if the police are considered to be the law of the land, that is how I term it and that is how I heard my fore-parents term them. They are to uphold law and order. Then I expect that systems would be put in place to improve the situation that is in existence.

7.10 p.m.

It is a sorry sight to see some of the things on television. I am not saying, Sir, that it is always true, but to see some of the sights on television and to hear the anger and the bitterness that many of our youth have towards police officers and without even having one experience with them, but it is because of what they see and hear, their perception of it, that helps to destroy the whole morale of the Police Force.

Mr. Deputy President, as I said, we are in a small society and I call it "the small society syndrome". I have a difficulty as well to hear very prominent people at times speak and associate or allege that our officers are involved in drugs. People tell you stories that will curl your hair and I know that out there in the society, if an individual does not have a good strong self-esteem it is easy for the person to become involved in something that is negative but I want to advise them, Sir, that it is okay to take bribes if that is what may be happening or is alleged to be happening but the consequences are very severe.

Aside.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Well I am saying it is okay for them. I am not saying it is okay because it is immoral for me. I am saying that the consequences are very severe when you look at it from the point of view that all of us have to live in this society. All of our children mix with them at church, at school, on the football field and wherever those drugs go it will impact on all of us and our children. It is not now me over here and you over there, it is all of us in this situation.

Mr. Deputy President, I have witnessed, with the two eyes the Lord has lent me, incidents where police fall down locking off people's necks, kicking and cuffing when it was a simple situation that did not merit it. I am using this to say yes again they are coming from the society where there is a breakdown in the moral fabric and we need to put systems in place to improve it.

Mr. Deputy President, I lived in a situation with a police officer of a very high rank. The drunkenness that is in existence in this Barbados needs to be examined and I am not going to say it without a recommendation.

Mr. Deputy President, the domestic violence situation in this country is at a very, very high level and policemen are human beings too. I am aware that when some of them come

to the homes, because of the lack of proper training, they are not able to adequately deal with situations that come to them. They say, "Well that is your husband and we are only police officers and we cannot do this and that". I am recommending that there be proper training put in place for those officers that they know how to handle themselves when they are faced with situations of domestic violence. Many of them are stressed out. There is need for the Police Force to have some kind of human resources manager. I do not know if that is the correct term to be used here. When they have these stressful problems they can approach those individuals and get counselling and get the necessary communication that would help them to be able to improve themselves. That to me would help with the low morale that is in existence there.

Mr. Deputy President, I also recommend that there be on-going training for police officers in the light that crime in Barbados is now so sophisticated and I hear children talking about the "Glock Nine" which I understand is a semi-automatic rifle or pistol and if police officers are not familiar with the changes in the ammunition or the equipment that is being used in the crime scene then they are at a loss as to how to really deal with the situation. So I would recommend yearly training for them, not only in that area but in the detection of drugs and many other domestic situations that would come up to help them to be able to deal with the problems.

Mr. Deputy President, I want to laud the efforts of those police officers who have been out there amidst all the problems, low salaries, low morale, little or no insurance on their lives, incentives are important. I want to applaud all those police officers who not only now but who for many, many years have been giving yeomen service to this country. I think they should be given medals for their performance over the years.

I agree with the comments made by Senator Trotman regarding the conditions of employment and I know that the Police Services Commission has been set up. I trust that the kind of recommendations made by Senator Trotman and others in here would be given some kind of attention so that they can be implemented. I do not know what document would have to be included in it but certainly I feel that at this point in time the measures that are registered here in this Act are necessary if we are to bring about a change. Barbadians are to have a different perception of the Royal Barbados Police Force and where it should be going in helping with the protection of the people of this country.

My final recommendation, Sir, is to do with the equipment that police officers have. We know that there are times when the vans, the jeeps and the other forms of equipment that they have to use in their job, need to be properly serviced. I know that there has been an attempt by the Attorney-General's office to be able to incrementally make changes and to make improvements that enhance the whole environment of the organisation.

It is unfortunate that I have passed and seen the poor condition of some of the police stations. And if it is just to say that only the outside has been upgraded there is no way that anybody could be standing in the Boarded Hall Police Station today for the condition that it was in over the last 10 to 15 years when nothing was done to enhance the environment that the police officers are working in.

I have been to St. Andrew's Police Station in Belleplaine and I saw windows that fell off. During the Crop-Over in 1995-96 I saw windows that fell off, floors that were broken, taps that were running and that police station has been upgraded. It might not have been done 100% but at least we need to continue to put maintenance programmes in place to ensure that the police stations and other government institutions are in a condition to accommodate the needs of the individuals who are working there and help to boost the morale among the workers to make them feel that the contribution that they are making is worthwhile and that it is being appreciated by all of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy President, it is with those few remarks that I would want to give my support to this amendment and I would want, as I said earlier, for some of the recommendations that were made here to be included in the document that would be presented to the Police Service Commission so that matters could be dealt with.

I started by saying that I am only a layman and therefore I would stand to be corrected if at anytime I am referring to things to do with the document that are not in the Act. I am only a layman and I am speaking from the perspective of a citizen of Barbados who has lived here and nowhere else and therefore I see, I hear, I smell, I know, and I would want to give my support to this. If there is need for further amendments to help to enhance the working conditions of the Police Force I would be only too happy to also lend my support to any improvements that would help to make their lives and our lives better. Thank you.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, I will be brief. I just want to lend my support to this Bill and note that the amendments that we are addressing are specific. They do not address the wider picture but they focus on an area of need as far as the management of the Police Force is concerned, and we have heard a lot about the conditions which the Police Force operates. We know the physical conditions are not what is desirable for this day and age. We are aware of that and since we came into office in 1994, we have taken significant steps to improve the physical conditions of the police stations.

7.20 p.m.

That cannot be gainsaid. All around the island at a lot of the police stations we have done a tremendous amount of work in order to rehabilitate, in some cases and to improve the physical conditions of the police stations. We know, Sir, that there is yet a lot more to be done but do not expect us to correct years of neglect in three or four short years. The problem did not arise since 1994 as Senator Boyce would want us to believe. The problems were there because of the neglect especially during the 1986 to 1994 period when virtually nothing was done to improve the physical conditions under which the Police operate. That is a fact that very little was done, if anything, between 1986 and 1994 to improve the physical conditions under which the Police act.

We have tried, Sir, since 1994 to work on a number of police stations, including the Central Police Station here in Bridgetown. A lot of work has been done and you would have expected that people on the Other Side would have given us a little credit for what we have done. But they expect Rome to be built in a day, but we will carry on our work because we understand the importance of the Police Force and we also understand the human relations point that in order to get people to function efficiently, the conditions under which they operate must be up to a certain standard.

We will continue the work because there is a lot more to be done. We know, Sir, that there are a couple police stations that will be completely rebuilt and so on. So the work is continuing. But this particular amendment speaks to a different problem. At the back of our minds we must remember that the Police Force is not an ordinary work force. It is a place where discipline must be the key word. The discipline of the Force is of prime importance, not only to the management of the police but to the wider society as a whole. That is why they are now putting in place a disciplinary code so that both the police and the public will know what is expected of the Members of the Force. It covers a lot of areas, Sir, and I think that Senator Boyce will do well to read and inwardly digest the requirements of the Code. There are very important because it speaks not only of the relationships within the Force but it speaks of relationships between the members of the Force and the public that they serve.

It is very important in my view, Sir, that we understand what we are discussing here. As you go through the Disciplinary Code, it speaks to the misconduct toward another Officer. It talks also about disobedience to order and neglect of duty. All of these things are here set out in print so that everybody can know what is expected of the Officers of the Force.

So by and large we have a very good Police Force but it does not mean that we do not have to be continually doing things to ensure that the Force maintains a very high standard. All these are necessary and I appreciate what some Members on the Other Side are saying that we need to look at the whole thing in a comprehensive and a holistic way. That is true. It is of special importance because the public must have confidence in the Police Force and *vice versa.* Without this confidence whereas the public know and can say "look we have a Force which is basically sensitive to our needs, to our culture and to our institutions." Therefore they will know what we expect of them and so on.

So that will give the public the feeling that they are being handled in a very sensitive and in a humane manner. That is why it is important that we have this Code put in place. It is as much for the benefit of the policemen themselves, as it is for the benefit of the wider public. The other issues have to be addressed, but in this piece of legislation we are focusing on putting in place a Code, a standard of behaviour which will prevent a high level of indiscipline to creep into what is basically a very good organisation.

So, Sir, we on this Side have no difficulty appreciating what the other Members are saying, but we know that at this point in time this legislation is necessary. I wish to commend the Members of the House, we know that it is a step forward in bridging the gap whether perceived or real between the Police and the public that they serve.

Sir, with those few words I want to support this resolution and I urged other Members of the Senate to do so.

Thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

DIVISION

A division has been called for.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative, the Senate dividing as follows:

Ayes: Senator the Hon. R. R. FARLEY, Senator the Hon. P. C. GODDARD, Senator Miss C. Y. FORDE, Senator T. E. BARKER, Senator the Hon. Miss O. P. SYMMONDS, Senator J. C. ODLE and Senator N. P. WELCH – 7.

Noes: Senator C. LeR. TROTMAN, Senator Dr. V. J. DAVIS – 2.

Abstention: Senator J. A. WORKMAN, Senator Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON, Senator J. D. E. BOYCE – 3.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R.. R. FARLEY the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Madam CHAIRMAN SENATOR THE HON. Miss O. P. SYMMONDS in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

Clause 3 was called.
7.30 p.m.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Madam Chairman, I was hoping to catch your eye to speak to Clause 3(h)(2) and to draw the attention of the Chamber to the language there. You will note that there should have been a series of instructions to be given and the infinitive should have been used where it says "without good and sufficient cause". That should have been "to conduct". The clause reads "conducts search". I would suggest that there is that typographical...

Asides.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: You have a clean version? I am sorry, Madam Chairman. The version I got was unclean. I would suggest then that it is not necessary to record that.

Clauses 3 to 7 were called and passed.

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

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

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PAYMENT OF AN INCREASED COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE TO PENSIONERS IN RECEIPT OF A GOVERNMENT PENSION

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to move this Resolution which seeks our approval for the payment of certain increases to pensioners. Basically the request concerns the payment of an increased cost of living allowance to a rate of 5% per annum for those pensioners who are in receipt of Government pensions and this is subject to a minimum of $25 per month and that that be granted to all Government pensioners to take effect from April 1, 1997 and also an additional increase of $15 per month effective April 1, 1997 be granted to the particular group of Government pensioners who would have retired prior to April 1, 1976.

This measure is part of the usual adjustment which is done in relation to the revised salaries and wages of public officers still remaining in the system and also out of recognition that the same factors which would have affected persons who are in the workforce would have necessitated an increase in wages, primarily a change in the cost of living would also have affected the pensioners.

I therefore, Mr. Deputy President, beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy President, I want to make a quick contribution on this matter to point out that the increase is one which we certainly believe and we would want to see the pensioners of this country get as soon as possible. They are at the hard end of the society. Everybody is aware of that. I am on record as indicating that we do not do near enough for our pensioners. The question of a 5% increase per annum and a minimum of $15 cost of living allowance. My question to the Honourable Senate Leader is how much of this addresses the actual cost of living for the pensioners? Because they have to pay all the VAT that we pay in the supermarkets and in the shops and I do not think that this figure begins to represent the kind of costs that they would have incurred.

We recall, Sir, that last year the minimum wage earners of this country were given cheques for $350. I think if you divide that by 12 the figure is certainly more than $30 or $40. It is a lot more than what we are talking about here.

Although we are not going to oppose this piece of legislation we did not give the VAT either so the point is that the VAT has cost an increase in the cost of living to all citizens of Barbados. The pensioners especially have had a tough time. We have paid the minimum wage earners $350, the ones who worked for $170 or less and we have not paid the unemployed anything and we now are ensuring that we give the 5% increase to the pensioners.

I do note, Sir, that if the record is to be correct this is something which was raised in the public because we dealt with this increase before and this was raised in the public programmes, the same public call-in programmes which members on that side purport to criticise and say serve no purpose. So it is interesting because the point was made and the record will show that the caller made the point that normally the pensioners would have an increase and the response the next day by the Right Honourable Prime Minister was yes, that was a slip and we would deal with it. Words to that effect. That is all I have to say on that.
7.40 p.m.

It is a pity that we are actually at such a late hour and moving so swiftly in this because I know that Senator Thompson had a special presentation which she wanted to make, but there will be opportunities when people are more receptive to suggestions when we will deal with the matters.

We choose on this Side when we will respond. We do not respond based on any challenges from them so we will deal with this matter in detail at the appropriate time. For now, I want to indicate that the 5% which we support very clearly is, in truth and in fact, inadequate and it does not really address the kind of real cost of living increases that have occurred out there and we need to get back to this, Sir.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this measure because I think that it is a matter which we all expected to have addressed, and it is being done. It follows a commitment which was made and I am sorry that I have to say something which differs from anything you may have heard earlier, Mr. Deputy President.

I wish to say that the Minister of Finance and the President of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations have, in fact, addressed this matter over some considerable period. It also was raised by the Subcommittee of the Social Partnership. It was not a matter that had to be addressed by any "caller-in" in the programme because the trade union movement was fully conscious of this particular requirement. The Minister of Finance was equally conscious, but we had been exercising our minds in the area of trying to find a more perfect approach to the matter of addressing adjustments in pensions.

I do not know the extent to which there has been public ventilation of this matter anywhere else, Mr. Deputy President, but I would like to make the observation that it is my view that this 5% adjustment coming from April last year is only a temporary measure, and that plans are even now being made to look in a more comprehensive manner – you would note, Sir, that I am interested in comprehensive things – at the concerns and conditions of pensioners, especially those who have retired on fixed pensions over some considerable period.

The problem we have is that when we are faced with greater life expectancy, we will get persons retiring having very limited sums of money as pensions. With the moving and the adjustment in the cost of living, those pensions over a period of time do not have any intrinsic value to the individuals, and the Government with the trade union movement, and I am sure other members of the Social Partnership, would be looking at ways and means by which we might be able to make adjustments on an ongoing basis to those pensions without having those pensions become part of the political footballery which there is from time to time, and which sometimes make the pensioner believe that he or she has to rely on the goodwill of political representatives when, in fact, we as a society should have a social and moral responsibility to those public servants to ensure that the pension accomplishes what was intended from the very outset. If the pension was intended to have that person live at a certain level of efficiency, then we ought to be in a position to make certain mathematical calculations and projections which would maintain that legal or even improve on that level.

As the previous speaker said, while I do not wish to go into great details about this, I would not wish the impression to be given that the trade union movement has not been very much in the vanguard of moving forward in this matter of pensions.

Aside.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: I am speaking to what is now and what I am expecting. I am speaking into the records regarding what I am expecting.

I am saying, Mr. Deputy President, that while I compliment the work of having the temporary arrangement, I am looking forward to the position which the trade unions have put, and which we are hopefully working together to get adjusted when there will shortly be a new dispensation for dealing in pensions. In the same way as I have said I know there is such a commitment that is being worked on now, I am looking forward to being part of the exercise that will position pensioners in Barbados in such a way that they will not have to wait for this period of time after the negotiations of a public sector negotiating exercise, but there will be an automatic adjustment based on criteria that are known beforehand and which the public at large will see as being transparent and being clear to all and sundry for the erudition and enlightenment.

Just those few comments, Mr. Deputy President, and I thank you.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Resolution which seeks to give an increase cost of living allowance to Government and State pensioners. I note that this is 5% per annum backdated to April 1, 1997 subject to certain conditions which are set out in the Schedule and the Addendum to the Resolution.

Sir, the whole issue of pensions is something which, as the last speaker said, had to attract the attention of all parties in this country, by that I mean interest groups as opposed to parties, because the demographics of this country have changed significantly in the last 20 years or so where we have a larger number now of old age pensioners, many of whom are dependent on the National Insurance and the State

for their pensions because not enough people in the private sector get pensions from their workplace. That, to me is a significant problem that the private sector, especially the big ones, are not required to put in place provisions for their staff members when they reach a certain age. That probably is a weakness in the whole system.

The point is that we have to come to grips with the fact that pensions and the provision of pensions is a big issue for Barbados as we move into the 21st century. It is expected that people will continue to live longer and what will happen is we are going to see in a short while a shrinking workforce having to support an enlarged pension force.

It is going to cause problems not only to the National Insurance but to Government because Honourable Members in here might not know but Government spends $82 million a year on provision of pensions and gratuity and that is a very large figure. We are not talking about peanuts. We are talking about a significant sum of money which has to come, as you know, from taxes and other revenue measures.

Now, these measures are going to cost, as we have seen, $3.2 million as shown in the Addendum. Three point two million dollars is added onto public expenditure. It is money well spent. All of us in here would agree that we wished it was a big increase because all of us in some way have either a mother, aunt, brother, somebody who is in receipt of Government pensions and we know that those people who retired, maybe 20 years ago, are not doing well because the pension at that time which was obviously based on their salaries, was low and the money they are getting now has not kept pace with inflation over the years. It is probably what some Headmasters age 80 and 85 are getting now. I think as a society, we have to do better, that is why we have to look at it in its whole totality, that is why we are going to await the report. As the last speaker said, this is just an interim measure until we can deal with it in a more fundamental and comprehensive way.
7.50 p.m.

Sir, do not forget that this Government has made significant moves with regards to pensioners because the tax allowances for pensioners have been adjusted so that the pensioners are paying less income tax hence as a consequence they have more take home pay. I cannot call it take home pay but perhaps it is more like take home pension.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: In short, Sir, they will have more disposable income as a result of the tax measures that this Government has introduced over the past few years. That is not something, Sir, to be scoffed at. In effect, it is putting more money in people's pockets.

We have to make sure that the support services are in place. I refer to things like the Land Tax Relief Board where pensioners are given relief from the payment of land tax.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Not all of them, depending on the needs. Certain Honourable Members in here would not qualify for that relief but pensioners who are at the lower end of the economic scale can get relief from things like land tax and so on. Notice, Sir, that the pension may be small but we have to put in place other measures which would, in the long run add up to more money basically in their pockets. Because if you do not have to pay land tax then that is money in your pocket basically to do other things.

Sir, while the increase may not be as much as we on this Side would have liked, we have to bear in mind that this comes out of the public purse and it is going to have implications for expenditure so that we can augment the pensioners income by doing other things. Other support services which would somewhat mitigate the effects of inflation on the small pensions.

Sir, the whole question of pensions must be kept under constant review. It is one of the critical issues facing our country as we move into the new millennium. Sir, obviously the National Insurance would also be affected in the same way because a lot of their expenditure is in the form of pensions, both old age contributory as well as old age non-contributory.

Sir, this is not a partisan matter. This is a matter that all parties have to come to grips with because it is a serious problem for us as we get more and more pensioners.

With those few words, I want to support the Resolution.

SENATOR Dr. V. J. DAVIS: Mr. Deputy President, it would be extremely remiss of me not to commend this Resolution to approve the payment of an increased cost of living allowance to pensioners who are in receipt of a Government pension. I was told that I must state my interest. Of course, I have a very definite interest in this. I was wondering why it took so long for Government pensioners to get this little piece of change.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. V. J. DAVIS: I am sorry that Senator Springer is not here because I was hearing and learning of the plight of a lot of our old age pensioners whose pensions are far from secure because of arrangements with maybe friends and family.

In my association with the Barbados Association of Retired Persons, I can assure you that we are going to make a serious thrust to have some form of legislation which seeks to give greater security for people who are pensioners and who have given other people the right to collect their pension. From all the reports that I have been hearing it seems as though it is a problem in our society. I am going to be talking more about this and you are going to be hearing more about this. That legislation has to be put in place to protect the pension of some of our pensioners who are quite incapable of securing this for themselves.

That is all I really want to say and to say thanks. It took a little while for me to get this money.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. V. J. DAVIS: I am so happy for pensioners. Senator Trotman said that there should be a much more automatic sort of system that when the cost of living goes up that it should be reflected in pensions.

Again, it is more than a great pleasure to support this Resolution.

Thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy President, I was not planning to speak but a challenge was thrown to the Opposition from the Other Side, a challenge which I dare to take up. As one who makes a living in the area of preparing individuals for retirement, retirement planning is at the core of what I do for a living and I cannot allow this Resolution to pass and not make a brief contribution. I was hoping that we would get through with our business that I could spend some time on this area.

I support the Resolution to increase the pensions of those individuals who are pensioners of the Government pension scheme. I, however, agree that it is not an adequate amount when one considers the increased burden placed on the incomes of these individuals.

I wanted to make a document of the Senate this paper "Aging Trends in Barbados". It is dated. But it projected the profile for Barbados into 2025. This document was prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census Centre for International Research. The research work was done between 1982 and 1986. I am not satisfied that as a Government, the Government of Barbados is paying enough attention to the serious challenge which aging will present to this population in the future. This document starts by stating that the aging of the Barbadian population is unusual in several aspects.

It goes on to say that among developing countries Barbados now has one of the highest proportions of older persons. It goes on further to say that the Barbadian future looks like that of the United States, both societies eventually face a rapid increase in older population as a result of prior baby booms. But per capita GNP in Barbados is only about one fourth of the level in the United States so that even though our profile is very similar, we in terms of Gross National Product, we are about only one fourth of the level in the United States.

It says that after 2010 planners can look forward to a steep rise in the elderly support ratio as the high fertility levels of mid twentieth century begins to reach age 65.

It goes on further to state that more than three-quarters of the elderly receive a pension. That is telling us now about the implications for national planning. What they consider to be an extraordinary high percentage by developing country standards. Therefore, for us in Barbados the challenge of the aging is still one of our greatest challenges. As we debate pensions in the public sector, this profile and even more recent information is very important to us.

I have heard Senator Trotman made reference to the committee and its work. I believe that he is looking at a form of indexation where pensions would increase commensurate with increases in prices. I believe what we need to do is to make sure that pensions are at a certain level, what we consider a comfortable level and then move from that point.

We have a problem because our pensions are not funded. We have a pay as you go. Now I know that there are some individuals in the public service and Members of Parliament I believe make some contribution to their own pensions but in the public sector, pension schemes are not funded schemes that means you pay as you go schemes and that is why we have them in our Estimates. Every year they are escalating because the population is an aging population. The challenge for Government therefore is, at what point do we start to reserve, try to set aside in our allocations, funds in a funded programme to assist in funding individuals who are entitled to a public pension.
8.00 p.m.

I believe this method also has to be applied in the NIS Scheme but as we look at public pensions there must be a way that the Government can start to invest now, percentages at home and abroad, in order to make sure that in the future the full funding of that retirement benefit for the public pensioner, does not have to come directly from Government revenues on an annual basis. If we look at the NIS Report for 1996 we will see that income from investments in the NIS Scheme totalled $55 million. So that is $55 million to fund the scheme that does not have to come directly from contributions on an on-going basis but is as a result of funds invested. It is a serious challenge which the Government of

Barbados must deal with because at some point public servants stand to benefit from a pension out of the NIS Scheme, the NIS Scheme that kicks in at age 65. There are some individuals who go off on a pension at age 60 and then the NIS benefit kicks in at age 65. I do not want to spend too much time on it but this is something I hate the thought of having to gloss over.

Not only is our population aging but our people are living longer. The challenge therefore is that we are going to be taking significant sums out of the Scheme. What I mean is that we have more people living to old age but the already aged are living longer as a result of improvement in our health services and our ability to diagnose diseases from which individuals died in the past. I think, in the NIS Scheme what I believe the challenge for us is, and one which all of the developed countries are now grappling with, is partial privatisation. Is this something you are going to consider? I think the time has come for us to reduce the contribution to the unemployment fund, that adjustment has to be made. I have not heard what is going to be done on the other end to the general fund. I know that is a political question. It has serious implications and I know that a Government which does not want to be associated with increased taxation might not want to deal with the challenge of the NIS Scheme but unless something is done to that contribution in the NIS Fund the margin is becoming too small, the difference between contribution and long-term benefit is definitely becoming too small. The portion of that contribution that is being invested is becoming too small and in 1995 benefits exceeded contributions in the NIS Fund. It is only because we managed to increase employment in some areas in 1996 that benefits did not exceed contributions. And that has very serious implications.

I am considered a baby boomer and I have been working ever since I was 16½, let me declare my personal interest now and the rate at which we are going, I may not get a benefit should I live to that age, from the NIS fund. And that is serious.

Individuals who do not understand actuarial science pooh pooh this thing and I want to make the point that I hope those persons who are advising the Government on pensions both in the public service and in the NIS Scheme are making full use of the knowledge, skills and training of actuaries. I do not want to think that we going about this without the people who are qualified to do it and it certainly is not the politicians. There is no politician in this country who is an actuary. There is no big successful businessman in this country who is an actuary. At the end of the day if we are going to deal with pensions we have to bring the individuals who are trained to do so.

I am going to sit but I would like to encourage us to make sure that we pay more attention to our aging population and our pensions.

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, under Introduction of Bills, I want to give notice of the Civil Establishments Leave Passages (Amendment) Order, 1998.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn *sine die.*

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.

8.10 p.m.

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PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY 1

1. Exchange Control (Business Establishments, Purchase and Issue of Foreign Currencies) Notice, 1998.
2. Draft National Physical Development Plan, 1998.
3. Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines and Procedures for Barbados.
4. Annual Report of the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation for the year 1996.
5. Barbados Water Authority (Water Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
6. Public Officers Loan and Travelling Allowances (Amendment) Regulations, 1998.
7. The Business Transfer (General Finance Corporation Limited) Vesting Order, 1998.
8. Green Paper on the Report Prepared by the Task Force on Nursing.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Suspension of Standing Order No. 45(2) for the remainder of the Sitting.

Senator the Hon. R. R. Farley, 1; Senator C. K. Laurie, 1; Mr. Deputy President, 3.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY 3

The following Bill was read a first time:

Bill to amend the Police Act, Cap. 167.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF LAND SITUATE AT COUNTRY ROAD, ST. MICHAEL 3

Senator the Hon. R. R.Farley, 3; Senator J. D. E. Boyce, 3; Senator Mrs. P. E. Rickinson, 7; Senator the Hon. P. C. Goddard, 7.

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