
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2008 – 2013

THE SENATE

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, December 10, 2008, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour SENATOR Dr. B. M. TAITT, M.A. M.B.A., B.A.(Hons.) D.H.L. (Hons.)(President)

Her Honour SENATOR Miss K. F. IFILL, B.Sc. (Hons.)

M.B.A.(Deputy President)

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. O. P. McCLEAN, M.A., M.B.A. B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons) (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) (Leader of the Senate)

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN, J.P., G.C.M., (E.B.M.A) (Marketing) (Minister of Agriculture)

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS, DPSA (Oxford) M.A. (Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour, and Immigration)

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE, M.B.A., B.Sc. (Econ.) (Fin.) CMA., FCA.(Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Investment, Telecommunication and Energy)

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER, CIM, Dip. Mng., M.B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

SENATOR P. GILKES

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE, M.A., B.A.,

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH

SENATOR the Rev. P.A.V. MILLINGTON, M. (Theol.)

SENATOR Miss P.i. INNISS, B. Sc., (Hon.)

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD, K.A., G.C.M., B.Com.,F.C.A. (Hons.), LL.D. (Hons.) (U.W.I.)

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. Newton, S.C.M., M.A. (Spec. Hons.), B.A., LL.B. (Hons.) (U.W.I.), F.L.A. (Gt. Brit.), L.E.C.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) (Dunelm)

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER, Ph.D., B.Sc. (Hons.)

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE, M.A. African Studies, M.B.A., B.A. (Hons.)

SENATOR J. A. C. HUTSON, B.C.H., M.R.A.C.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received communication from Senator K. D. Symmonds, indicating that he is out of the country on business and will be unable to attend this Sitting of this Honourable the Senate. Therefore, his excuse is accepted.

PAPERS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following documents:

1. Public Officers (General) Order, 2008;
2. Public Service (Part-Time Officers) Order, 2008;
3. Public Service (Teachers) Order, 2008;
4. Judges Remuneration and Pensions (Salary) Order, 2008;
5. Judges Remuneration and Pensions (Conditions of Service and Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations, Order, 2008;
6. Ombudsman (Salary) Order, 2008

7. Supreme Court (Master of the High Court) Salary Order, 2008;
8. Senate and Honourable House (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 2008;
9. Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 2008;
10. Parliament Administration (Salary) Order, 2008;
11. Annual Report for the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) ending March 31, 2008.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR
SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY
A MINISTER

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I beg to move that Standing Order 22(1) be suspended for the remainder of the day's Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the following Bill be read a first time:

1. Transport Board (Amendment) Bill, 2008.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

11.30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the following:

1. Resolution to approve the Public Service (General) Order, 2008.
2. Resolution to approve the Public Service (Teachers) Order, 2008.
3. Resolution to approve the Public Service (Part-Time) Order, 2008.
4. Resolution to approve the Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 2008.
5. Resolution to approve the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 2008.
6. Resolution to approve the rates of salaries and allowances applicable to the posts of Personal

Assistant, Executive Assistant, the Press Secretary, Executive Personal Secretary and Clerical Assistant to the Prime Minister as set out in the Schedule.

7. Resolution to approve the rates of salaries and allowances applicable to the posts of Personal Assistants to Ministers as set out in the schedule.
8. Resolution to approve the payment of an increased cost of living allowance to government pensioners.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Mr. President, before we begin Public Business, I beg to take this opportunity to extend our deepest condolences to our dear colleague, Senator Derrick Alleyne on the passing of his father, Mr. George Alleyne. I was among many persons, who would have attended the funeral of our late brother George and the sheer number of persons attending and the many tributes paid would suggest that the father of Senator Alleyne was a pillar in his community in the general Westbury/St. Leonard's area.

Sir, from all that was said, I think that his son was, in many respects, quite unlike his father. His father was described as a very quiet man, as a gentle man - I am sure Mr. Alleyne is a gentleman or a colleague Senator - and he was described as somebody who gave his all to his community, who was willing as a merchant seaman to deprive his children of the goodies that would have been brought home from those far-flung places to share with neighbours who would, of course, in those days, would have found these items to be major treats.

I believe that in listening to the Eulogy, the tributes paid and the conversations prior and after the funeral that our dear colleague Senator would have been a child of a father, who in those days gave his all to his children as well, who imparted in his children the essential values that have come to be known as Barbadian generosity, kindness, respect for authority and importance of education.

Therefore, as I have said, even though our colleagues can be quite outspoken and, in many ways, his foundations were very much grounded in his father. I had the opportunity to speak to our colleague, who indicated his deep gratitude and enduring love for his late father. Therefore, I believe it would have been remiss of me, for the records, not to offer our condolences on behalf of fellow Senators and my personal condolences. I would say to my colleague that his father had lived a good life, had passed on an excellent legacy and has gone to be with his maker, where I trust my colleague would meet him in the by and by, based on all that his father would have imported.

Mr. President, therefore, I would want that the condolences be recognised and, on a more happy or positive note...

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Sir, I am preempting my colleagues, who may also want to speak to the contribution of the late George Alleyne and I, therefore, would provide that opportunity.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Inniss.

SENATOR Miss P.I. INNISS: Mr. President, thank you for recognising me. I too would like to join with Senator McClean in offering condolences to a gentleman, who has become a very dear friend, Senator Alleyne, on the passing of his father.

Sir, only in the short time that I have heard of his contribution to those persons in his area, Westbury, and a number of other areas, I realised the great contribution that his father made to that society. I think it is heartrending but it is an important contribution that he has made. Sir, I see such activities reflected in Senator Alleyne, who himself champions the cause of the lesser persons, the more depressed in the society.

Mr. President, I would like to offer my personal heart-felt condolences. Sir, as I listened to comments on Senator Alleyne's father, I realised that he, in essence, captured the true meaning of life, that is, to help others; to support others; to do what you can to make life a better place for lesser fortunate persons, as is the case with so many unsung heroes in this society, who are never recognised with knighthoods or who are never given any great acclamations.

He made a significant contribution and, Mr. President, I tell you sincerely that even at the funeral, my heart was warned at the manner in which persons were touched by his passing. The void that is left by his passing and the things that he had done and will no longer be continued in the society because he was a society man.

Sir, I actually thought such had passed but he was a community man. He gave to the cricketers in the Constituency. He fed everyone he could find, he asked about their welfare. He asked how they were doing at school. He punished those who were not doing right. He did what our fathers are supposed to do, and I commend him thoroughly.

Sir, I see exactly why Senator Alleyne has become the man he has. He is so very jovial, even at the passage and I often asked him if he was all right. He responded

"Yes, man, I am fine, I am fine." I have not seen a tear, but he said he cried in his spare moments and at quiet times.

I know it must be a hard burden, it may never be totally erased but I am sure that all Senators and those who knew the man who has passed away, and the man here, continue to offer our support and our love in his passing.

I offer my greatest condolences to him and his family and all those who are touched by the passing.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Newton.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V.E. NEWTON: Mr. President, on behalf of the Independent Senators, I rise to extend my condolences to Senator Derrick Alleyne. I did not know his father personally, but if he produced a son with the qualities that Senator Alleyne shows, I think he was a fine man.

MR. PRESIDENT: The Chair would like to be associated with the remarks that have been made so far and would want to confirm, especially that which was said by the Leader of Public

11.40 a.m.

Fortunately or unfortunately for me, I knew George Alleyne, personally, and I am able to speak with authority and say that he was, indeed, all that was said of him at the Eulogy. I think I can confirm his son, Senator Alleyne, while he might not have demonstrated his capacity to cry real tears, suffered immensely at the loss of his Dad, as he vouchsafed to me at a time subsequent to the day of the funeral.

I think it will be unusual if I did not communicate the condolences of all of us who have known George Alleyne, and the Alleyne family for all those years. I shall direct that the sentiments of the Senate be conveyed to the Alleyne family in the usual manner, and shall request the Clerk of Parliament to do the necessary.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Alleyne.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Sir, on behalf of my family and myself thank you for the kind words. Just a little bit about my father. He would sit in a room and you would not know that he was there, and his capacity to suffer pain and not express it was overwhelming, so much so he went to the hospital the Monday at 11.00 a.m. and he died at 6.00 a.m. The prognosis was that he was probably suffering for two three weeks without saying a word to anyone. That is the nature of George Alleyne, quietly he lived and quietly he passed. I want to say thanks for the kind words of all the

Senators and all the Members who expressed condolences on behalf of my family.

Thank you very much.

CONGRATULATORY SPEECHES

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President on a happier note I want to take the opportunity to express our congratulations to our Senator Peter Millington on his recent marriage to Dayne Marshall. I noted on his arrival, because I was here before, what I thought was a youthfulness but what my colleague to my right referred to was a freshness on his face. On exploring the reason, it was confirmed he was, in fact, married quite recently. I believe we would see a much happier colleague in the future. I anticipate that he will continue to enjoy the blessings of marriage and I want on behalf of the entire Senate to wish him well. I am sure others may want to do so at this time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator IFILL.

Her Honour SENATOR Miss K.F. IFILL: Mr. President, I too would like to offer my congratulation to Senator Millington. The Bible tells us that whosoever findeth a good woman findeth a good thing. I do not know if the same can be said for whoever findeth a good man ...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Madam Deputy President, I am sure you would wish to restate that.

Asides.

Her Honour SENATOR Miss K.F. IFILL: Yes, Sir. I totally agree. I am sure that the opposite would be said in this situation. That is all that I will say, Sir.

I am sure that Senator Millington's new wife will help him to continue to make the valuable contributions he has made in our society and in this Chamber. I am sure that the freshness on his face will be conveyed in all other aspects and elements of his person, and in all his activities. I trust that his marriage will serve not to deplete, but to increase his abilities to make his contributions in all aspects of life.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

SENATOR R.O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, it would be remiss of me since I have met the young lady

before the marriage, not to say what a magnificent choice he has made and what a lucky man he is. I too noticed the freshness in his step, I should say, not in his face, in his step. I think this is a very good thing for us in the Senate and both of them. I would like to wish, on behalf of the Independent Senators, the absolute best for him in the future and for his family.

Thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Chair would wish to join in these felicitations and would wish the record to so show. In congratulating my colleague Senator, I would want to say he has set an example which should verily be followed by a number of other Senators in this Honourable Chamber, who might wish for reasons well-known to others, but could be solicited from Senator Millington himself to follow in the footsteps of Senator Millington.

Any Senator who has not yet found himself a wife, or any Senator who has not yet found herself a husband, might wish to follow in those footsteps. It would be remiss of me sitting in this Chair not to commend Senator Millington for the magnificent example which he has set to those young Senators in this Chamber and even the not so young, I am told, who have not discovered the glory, the joy, the wonder, the absolute pleasure of being a married person. I commend it with all the force at my disposal. I am sure that Senator Alleyne would want to place special attention to this, in the light of the circumstances.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Those Officers of Parliament who may be within hearing of my voice might wish also to follow the example that has been set so magnificently by Senator Millington.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am speaking directly and know exactly what I saying to those officers who may be in the hearing of my voice, that the opportunity will present itself for them, also, to solemnise any possibilities they have discovered as soon as possible, the earlier, the better.

Senator Millington, I am very happy to join with those who have commented positively about your magnificent choice.

Thank you.

Senator Millington, you have the Floor.

SENATOR the Rev. P.A.V. MILLINGTON: Mr. President, I thank everyone for their kind remarks today. I ask God to choose for me and not for me to choose myself,

on the occasion. I am happy. I am settled. I am content, and somebody had suggested that I will now get a balanced diet, rather than bread and cheese. I could not help putting in that 11.50 a.m.

SENATOR the Rev. P.A.V. MILLINGTON: I thank everyone and I am looking forward to making my contribution in the Senate. She supports me in everything that I do. Therefore, I can look forward to making a greater contribution to the Senate and to Barbados.

Thank you very much.

ORDER NO. 4 – THE PUBLIC SERVICE (GENERAL)
ORDER, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Public Service (General) Order, 2008. Sir, Orders 4 through 11 are all related to salaries, and if there is no objection from the Senate, I ask that these be taken as an omnibus debate.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I hear no objection, therefore, these several Resolutions may be debated as an omnibus debate.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, before us today is an omnibus Resolution to approve salary increases for a range of public servants in the general service, members of staff of the Prime Minister's office, personal assistants, et cetera. I believe that in order to address this matter, we should, perhaps, first speak to the context and background within which these salary adjustments were negotiated and generally agreed to.

Today, unlike any time in, certainly, my living memory, and as you might have said earlier, I am one of those not so young persons, the international economic landscape is one in which there is a significant level of uncertainty. As we know, Barbados, as a small open economy, will be impacted in ways known to all of us, the economic and social, et cetera, but in this context, will be impacted economically on what has transpired, and what will transpire in the international economic space.

It is therefore important to recognise that as Government sought to negotiate with its partners and the union representing those public servants, several factors had to be taken into consideration. One, of course, had to do with the economic prospects facing Barbados, as an economy such as I described before, the current salary structures and actual dollar levels of salaries paid to public servants.

The ability of this Government as well, will apply in any other situation to foot the bill to pay any increases and, therefore, it is important to recognise that contextually, public servants receive a significant percentage of the total Government Budget. Therefore, one factor that has to be considered, as I said before, is Government's ability to pay.

Notwithstanding that, it is also important, perhaps, to recognise, in terms of context, the relationship between the current salary increase and those that have been paid in the past. Notwithstanding what we would have heard from the Opposition in another place, the salary increase offered to public servants represents a salary increase which is, certainly in many instances higher, and I would probably say, absolutely higher than any paid in the last 15 years.

Sir, it is also recognised that as we talk about trends, we also have to look at trends in relation to the cost of living, inflation, et cetera. I believe that it will be clear from the discussion that we will hear today, that the Government has been very prudent. It has been fair. It has been very reasonable in its negotiations.

I believe that when we look at the increases and we weigh those against some of the possible negative scenarios at the most extreme, our employees in the Public Service, or public servants and all of those persons who are paid by the public purse, will realise that there has been a judicious balance between the need to meet the needs of our people working in the public sector and earning in the public sector.

There is also the need to balance that need with the importance of maintaining our workforce in a way that recognises that we cannot be overly generous, but we also have to be, in this case, providing for persons to meet their expenses.

In listening to the discussion in another place, it left me to wonder whether there was any recognition that this Administration has at its very heart, a major concern, the ability of the average Barbadian to survive in the face of all possible economic scenarios emanating from the current world financial situation. Of course, as we know, this is not of our making, but one in which we will have to anticipate, respond to and plan for.

Sir, in doing so, prior to the settlement of the salaries, Government would have taken and put in place certain initiatives which certainly translate into reduced cost.

I speak specifically for persons who have children of school age, the introduction of a free bus service. If we convert that into dollars and cents for any household, and then we add that on to a salary increase, for example, we can then see that notwithstanding the increases that were

granted, they were higher than what would have been offered in the last decade and a half that persons at the end of the day would find themselves being in a better position when they look at those increases, along with the reduction in household expenditure on bus fares.

Mr. President, let me just give a very quick example, because I do not believe that I have to stand here for a very long time to convince Barbadians, or my colleagues here in the Senate, that the settlement is one that is fully supported. Sir, if I look at a situation where bus fares currently are at \$1.50 and, perhaps, \$1.00, if you were travelling on the Transport Board buses before, and a person who has two or three children taking a bus or two, they can find themselves spending maybe as little as \$15.00 a week for one child to as much as \$60.00, if a couple of children had to take more than one bus.

The point is that if a person who works for about \$300.00 a week or, perhaps, \$400.00 a week, I perhaps should have cited the lowest salary figure in the Public Service. Sir, if you look at that person's gross pay and he or she as a parent or guardian is saving \$60.00 a week in bus fare, we need to count that also to a percentage of gross salary and add that on to salary increases.

I believe that when we look at what has been offered, we have a situation in Barbados where this Administration, very promptly, recognises that it had to address the financial needs of our public servants who constitute a substantial percentage of the workforce and who, as I said before, constitute a substantial percentage of the Government's budget, in terms of wages and salaries in total remuneration.

Sir, I also want to speak to the issue of percentage salaries offered and the notion that, perhaps, they should have been some different arrangements in terms of a sliding scale at the bottom of the salary ladder, so to speak.

12:00: noon

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: One of the issues that we have to bear in mind is that Barbados has to recognise, as it set salaries across the Public Service, that it has to address a number of competing issues. I think this was raised and discussed very well by the Honourable Prime Minister in another place.

Mr. President, when we set salaries at the bottom of the scale, they should be examined in relation to what is paid for comparable positions in the private sector. I would argue that salaries at the bottom and at the middle of the public sector are very comparable, and in some instances better, with those in the private sector.

However, as the public sector becomes more complex in its operation and as the need arises to recruit and retain a number of specialist professional categories of staff, the Public Service has to compete with the private sector in a way that it does not have to compete at the lower levels. By that I mean that in order to attract, recruit and maintain the services of professionals in specialist categories, there needs to be an attractive salary and attractive terms and conditions of employment. What we see happening, however, is that there has been a widening of the gap between the salaries offered to public servants in those positions and the similar positions in the private sector.

Simultaneously, or as a corollary, while the gap is widening between the private sector and the public sector for specific categories of skills and employment levels, we also see a narrowing in the Public Service of the gap between the lowest levels and the highest levels.

Let me speak a little bit to that because, in making that point, I might have confused you a little bit. I do not think so, but just in case, Mr. President.

In the Public Service, the highest paid worker earns, I am sure, less than seven times the salary of the lowest paid worker. People may say that is all right, but when we look at the point I made before about being able to recruit persons in highly specialised positions, et cetera, it creates a challenge.

Mr. President, we have, therefore, to recognise that in narrowing that gap we may, in fact, be creating difficulties, not for the employees at the bottom of the scale who are being well compensated, as I said before, especially when we make some comparisons outside of the Public Service, but in getting persons to do those jobs. Therefore, I think that when we start to look at those bands, we need to be careful when we start to make those kinds of comparisons.

Mr. President, I believe that salaries should reflect what is just, fair, and equitable, therefore that equity, fairness, reasonableness and appropriateness of salaries commensurate with responsibility, et cetera, must be reflected at all levels of the Public Service.

Overall, I believe in negotiating with the partners to this industrial relation process, that the Government of Barbados has been extremely fair. I think that public servants themselves seem to be quite happy. I think the process has been negotiated and agreed to in a manner which bears recognition of the several factors which must come together to ensure that Government, as an employer, is reasonable, is fair, is just, and will ensure that Barbadians by and large are in a position to properly negotiate their way through the economic challenges - I

refrain from using the word crises because we are not there yet - that face us.

This Government is committed to ensuring that its workers work with good pay and with good conditions of work. As I mentioned before, giving our workers a good pay is something that we are serious about to ensure that our public servants can survive and maintain the quality of life that we are accustomed to.

I do not believe that I need to spend a long period of time on my feet trying to convince you, Mr. President, or my colleagues in the Senate of the need to support this.

With those comments, I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I rise to support the ombudsman Resolution. I agree that it is both a balanced and prudently generous offer.

However, I would wish to comment on a few details of the proposal before us to basically look at the offer in terms of the global situation that we are in. The question of raising the proportions at the bottom seems to me to be a red herring of very little significance if we look at the fact that the ratio between the top and the bottom is somewhere between 6.1 and 6.3 per cent.

I think, perhaps, the most telling figure is that the lowest Government employee earns something like \$17 000 a year. The fact of the matter is that the UN figures for Barbados show absolute poverty at \$6 000 a year and under, and relative poverty between \$6 000 and \$10 000. In that case, the lowest level is not really badly off in any real sense.

What is interesting is that in the private sector there is no comparative movement for such people. There are still people whose take-home pay is \$100 a week. They are the working poor. On top of that, there are people like gas station attendants who not only earn very little, but if there is any error, the attendant loses, not the owner of the station. I can attest to this because there was an error in my case where the machine malfunctioned and gas was spilled.

What I am trying to say is that somewhere out there the private sector should show at least some element of consciousness of the plight of the poorest working people in this country.

Mr. President, I also wanted to make the curious observation that the pensions increase was 4 per cent, which is not at the same level of anything else. That is just a side point. However, getting to the overall question of

how this is placed in the context of the economic crisis that the world is undergoing, I appreciate that while we are not yet in a situation of crisis, it is unlikely that we are going to be always in the clear.

I, therefore, understand the measure of putting some more money into the economy to keep it stimulating. I would hope, however, that most of this money comes after Christmas when we would probably begin to feel the effects of what is happening and that the increased salaries for this month be paid but that the arrears be paid after that point. That is one specific point.

Most economists believe, both on the left and the right, that it is necessary to put some sort of stimulus package into play at a time like this. This is a considerable stimulus package in terms of what it means to the ordinary person. Most developed countries spend a lot of money on propping up banks, et cetera, but the so-called middle-classes do not get touched. In this case, it is being effected.

12.10 p.m.

Mr. President, I would also like to say that, perhaps, we ought to be looking beyond salary increases at this time, to do things that are out there that we sometimes do not touch or have not done.

I think the first one is that we have a very unique name to our country Barbados. The French has a place called Champaign and a place called Bourdeau and nobody is allowed to use these names otherwise. Obviously, if we are prepared to register Barbados as a trading name, only to be used by companies operating in Barbados, or by companies that seek to use the name and pay for the privilege, we would have to grandfather those countries which now use it willy-nilly. In Chile, there are Barbados jeans; in Germany, there are Barbados solarium, in Costa Rico they make Barbados-styled hot sauce, and the list goes on.

Mr. President, we obviously could not now affect those people, but we would make it clear that we have the name and that it has to be paid for, if used. I have no idea what revenue this would bring to us, but it would certainly bring some revenue to us, from anybody trying to use the assets of this country to promote their own product.

Mr. President, the other proposal I would like to make is in keeping with what happens in several countries in the world at the moment and, that is, I think we spend about, or there is spending on or about \$20-plus millions of trinkets on Barbados. There are countries which allow those souvenirs to be made only there, and I think this is a measure that we should put in place. It would give our artisans an opportunity to add some value to those products, and in cases where we do not and probably have

not the ability to make such products, any one wanting to make them would do so in Barbados, while employing a number of Barbadians.

Mr. President, the point is that these are things we need to put at this time, at this particular juncture.

Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr PRESIDENT: Senator Walters.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: I rise to support the ombudsman Resolution which seeks to increase the salaries and allowances of public officers for the period 2008- 2010. These officers include general workers, clerical officers, technical officers, Permanent Secretaries, et cetera. These positions are normally the subject of collective bargaining between the senior public servants and the unions which represent those classes of workers.

Sir, included in the ombudsman Resolution are other provisions, some of which include remunerations and allowances for Members of the Honourable Senate and Honourable House, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, posts assigned to the Prime Minister's Office, the rates of salaries and allowances paid to Personal Assistants to Ministers, and a Resolution to approve the payment of an increased cost of living to Government pensioners.

Mr. President, as Senator Marville has mentioned, the increase for Government pensioners is less than the increase which we were hoping to approve in this Senate today. Sir, the formula for that increase to Government pensioners is two-thirds of what was the agreed increase between the trade unions for their staff.

Mr. President, as a human resource practitioner, I am pleased to be able to contribute in this debate, in my capacity as Minister of Labour for the Civil Service, and we are discussing public officers' salaries. Sir, employment relations and collective bargaining is not an exact science. It depends on the approaches used by the leading actors on the employers' side, and on the side of the trade union.

Collective bargaining in the Public Service in Barbados is usually undertaken between public service managers and the individual trade union, and very special circumstances which had been obtained in a period previously in 1993, where the use of the Social Partnership was used where there was a wages freeze in 1993 in the first Prices and Incomes Protocol.

During the course of this year, a number of things happened, including the fact that there were some meetings of the Social Partnership - and my colleague Senator Alleyne was not very necessarily impressed that we would

have gone that particular route, at the juncture at which we went there - but the Social Partnership is also dear to the heart of this Government, since we had instituted it in 1993 while being in office.

Mr. President, in April this year, the thinking was that the Social Partnership should begin to look at what was the economic climate, and at the kind of challenges that we may likely be facing during the course of the next year or two. There was a view held by some parties that the Social Partnership should have a closer eye on the business of wage fixing in both the private sector and public sector.

However, when one does an examination of the Protocols, there is also a provision for individual trade unions to negotiate, to do whatever collective bargaining they think necessary, or to be involved in whatever industrial relation issues that are necessary to represent their membership.

The view of the public officers who work in the Ministry of the Civil Service was that they would follow the practice of negotiating with the individual union. Sir, by August 5, 2008, after the Ministry of the Civil Service had written to the unions inviting them to submit proposals for the period April 1 to March 31, 2010, the National Union of Public Workers submitted its proposals on August 5, and these proposals were considered.

The proposals the National Union of Public Workers submitted was for a 15 per cent, with a 9 per cent from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, and a 6 per cent commencing April 1, 2009, until March 31, 2010.

The Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados made its submission of August 20 requesting a sliding scale increase of 14 per cent at the top of the salary scale, and a 20 per cent at the bottom, over a two-year period. That is the context into which we need to place these negotiations between the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados and the National Union of Public Workers.

Mr. President, meetings were held with both unions and, I believe, after two meetings, the National Union of Public Workers was able to have a settlement with the senior Public Service managers on behalf of the Government of Barbados.

12.20 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. A.B. WALTERS: The level of that settlement was 6 per cent in the first year and 4.5 per cent in the second year. There has not been an agreement with CTUSAB, but CTUSAB has written to the Government acknowledging that they would accept the 6 per cent and 4.5 per cent for the senior civil servants

meaning Permanent Secretaries and those senior civil servants who are within the "S" scale but they would wish to continue negotiating on what they consider a sliding scale for the bottom of the Public Service.

Mr. President, the difficulty that we faced in continuing those negotiations is very simple. In the 1960s, the ratio of salaries between the top of the Civil Service and the bottom of the Civil Service was 15:1. In the 1970s, it was reduced to 10:1 and, it is now at 6.3:1. Sir, that is an indication of the type of compression which exists in the salaries of the public servants from the Permanent Secretaries down to the general worker. You may have a civil servant at the top of the scale earning \$120 000 or thereabout and, at the bottom of the scale, you would be looking at \$17 500 or thereabout.

Mr. President, here is the dilemma that some of the commentators have. Sir, in the private sector, at the top of the ladder, there are persons in executive positions who are certainly going to be earning more than \$150 000 a year. It is quite possible, if you are operating a retail operation, that the Chief Executive Officer and the person who is the shop assistant...

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. A.B. WALTERS: Sir, I take the point that Senator Marville made, that the gas attendant is essentially a shop assistant and their wages are covered by the Shop Assistant Wages Order and, the last one was done in 2005. Sir, currently a wages council has been set up and that Wages Council is considering increasing those wages of shop assistants.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. A.B. WALTERS: The rate at the moment for a 40-hour week is \$200. I take the point that Senator Marville made that they are developing in this Committee something called shortages. The truth of the matter is that nobody should really take money out of anybody's pay because there is a piece of legislation called the Protection of Wages Act and before you do that, you have to be certain that the person is able to take home enough money.

The Law, in fact, states that you could not take more than one-third of a person's wages in any particular pay period. I think that point has to be made. Sir, sometimes I argue the point that there are two classes of employees in Barbados because, if I went to agriculture, the agricultural worker gets about \$6.20 or thereabout an hour but sometimes they may not be in a position to get 40 hours depending on the weather conditions during the out-of-crop season.

Mr. President, there are other types of operations where people are earning less than \$200 per week. Sir, one of the things we are proposing to do, and that we would have proposed in our Manifesto, is that we are looking at a national minimum wage and hopefully, we would put that recommendation in place during the next year.

The Proposal also says that we would look at it sectorially because to go for a global national wage and, as the newspapers are now suggesting, to go for \$300 per week may mean that we may be starting a slide towards much greater unemployment than you would wish to see in this community.

Mr. President, let us look at some of the other issues surrounding this wage settlement. The last wage settlement for the period 2006-2008, the public servants would have gained a 7.5 per cent in the first year, and 2.5 in the second year, which is a 10 per cent increase. This increase for the period 2008-2010 is the highest increase that public servants would have had in a 14 year period. The agreement with the National Union of Public Workers is, in fact, an agreement where the public workers, on their proposal would have got somewhere near 70 per cent of the wages that they asked for. The average over the last 10 years or so has been in the region of 45 per cent and 50 per cent. When you look at some of the other data on public sector wages with increases vis-a-vis the inflation rate, there is an argument, which has been put abroad, which says that the 6 per cent certainly is less than the inflation rate of 10 per cent in 2007 and rising towards 8 per cent in 2008.

Mr. President, I want to make the point that this is not a December 2008 agreement. It is an April 2008 agreement and one must, in some ways, go back to what were the conditions, had you negotiated it at April 1, 2008 and I think that is a significant point which has to be taken into account.

Mr. President, I have worked in industrial relations now for approximately 32 years and there were occasions, around this time of the year, when the trade unions sometimes held up negotiations deliberately on a view, which say that they need to get back pay for their people around Christmas, and the most famous of those people used to be the beverage group.

The beverage group would wait until this weekend and shut down the place, so that they could get a better increase for the beverage workers. If they shut down the place now, you would get the impression that you could not get any drinks for Christmas and Barbadians must have areated drinks for Christmas so this put pressure on the employers. Sir, that has been the usual thing. Mr. President, sometimes in negotiating agreements, you hang out for a year, two years or three years depending on the circumstances of the particular agreement.

Mr. President, in terms of what this is going to mean to the Government of the day, we have taken into account that the inflation rate is going to rise somewhat. There may be some deflationary spiral that may take place next year.

12.30 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. A.B. WALTERS: There is certainly going to be some economic challenges from what we have been seeing out of the global economic crisis recently, certainly in relation to the financial crisis. This wage increase, certainly, should not cause us a lot of difficulty to maintain that level of wages for the two-year period.

In essence, what it is doing that by April 1, 2009, persons would have had the benefit of a 10 per cent increase. Although I am hearing the argument that an 8 per cent increase would be adequate, because the inflation rate is 8 per cent, by April 1, 2009, public workers would have additional funds in their pockets and, therefore, should be able to weather the storm which one would expect.

Sir, part of the justification which we used, and I suppose the NUPW accepted, was that the Government had a duty to look after its personnel. The personnel that the Government currently employs is in the range of 28 000 persons. There would be a fair amount of those persons in the lower half of the salary bands. One of the things we really could not do was to compress the salary ranges any further from around 6 per cent. Among the difficulties we are now experiencing is the business of recruiting technical personnel to run a number of the projects in Government. We are having difficulty recruiting accountants, engineers and other persons who would have obtained degrees.

Sir, one certainly has to accept the premise in today's world, that when I started work at the Ministry of Transport and Works in 1967, my pay was \$31.68 a week. That is not the wage you are going to pay anybody to go into the Ministry of Transport and Works, not even to weed the road, but that was the kind of salaries we were talking about then. The qualification of persons entering the Service at entry level, my suspicion is that in 2008, those entry level qualifications have gone toward, not an

Associate Degree, but a first degree in order to be recruited at entry level.

I have had a number of phone calls, recently, where persons with First Degrees cannot find a job in the Public Service. I have had to advise a few young people that the best thing for them to do, if you have a first-class degree in anything, including Computer Science or IT, to complete their Masters, then find somewhere else. We are going to have a limited number of positions for those persons who come out with a First Class Degrees. We have a limited number of positions for persons who come out with a Masters Degree. We have done away with the five "O" Levels a long time ago, and that is the reality.

Sir, if you want a job as a supervisor in the Public Service, certainly I suspect you will have to be looking at a position at the minimum of an Associate Degree and would have had to attend, say BIMAP, and do a supervisory management course. That is the kind of minimum we are looking at.

Sir, there have been six wage settlements over the last number of years. There has been only one occasion when a sliding scale method was used. In terms of agreements between the various trade unions, 1997-1999, was the only occasion within recent time, that NUPW and CTUSAB have both agreed to the increases.

In the agreement, 1999-2001, only NUPW agreed; 2001 -2003, only CTUSB agreed; 2003-2006, only NUPW agreed and 2006-2008, only NUPW has agreed. Certainly on three occasions in the last 10 years, only NUPW has agreed to the wage increases. It is normal to take these matters to both Chambers so that salaries can be legislated.

Sir, the increase of the 10.5 per cent, being larger than any one given under the last Administration, is in line with some of the increases given in the private sector. In the private sector, when I did an analysis of the work done by the Employers' Confederation and the BWU, the private sector Agreements reflected the first year of most agreements which fell somewhere between 5 and 6 per cent, with an additional 4 to 5 per cent in the second year. That is a reasonably good argument to suggest that we are necessarily on par with what is happening in the private sector, although at some levels in the workforce their wages might be slightly lower than our general worker rates.

Sir, the Central Bank, and Standard and Poor's, which is a rating agency, and other agencies, have commented favourably on the level of increases agreed with by NUPW, describing them as responsible and in the interest of the Barbadian economy. The cost of the Agreement with NUPW would amount to approximately \$65 million in the first year and \$52 million in year two.

When you take those two figures within the context of a \$1 billion wage bill per year, and the expectation is, some of that will be taken back either through direct or indirect taxes. Those figures might be slightly less than the \$65 million or \$52 million.

Sir, the level of expenditure in terms of salary that would be accounted for by the Barbados Government is at the level of about \$48.5 per cent. I believe that in the private sector, wages are probably around 35 per cent of gross expenditures.

12.40 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Mr. President, the level of settlement in the 1997-1999 period, the union asked for 22 per cent. They got 9.25 per cent over the two periods. In the 1999-2001 period, they asked for a 10 per cent increase. They got 6.5 per cent. In 2001-2003, they proposed 12 per cent. They got 5.75. In the 2003-2006 period, they put a 15 per cent proposal. They got an 8 per cent increase over three years.

In that Agreement, the union had asked for a reopening of the agreement and, I believe, they got an additional 2.5 per cent, which was deemed to be the accelerated cost, but which was not pensionable, because of a 2.5 per cent ex gratia payment, which was not pensionable. In 2006-2008 the proposal was 21 per cent and they got 10 per cent.

Mr. President, with those remarks, I believe I made the case reasonably well to show that these increases are not exorbitant. They will allow us to live a reasonably happy existence. Certainly, most public workers would be happy.

I would wish to say also that we discussed earlier in the year just before the financial statement, with a number of interest groups that we have made some promises to, including the nurses, the police and teachers.

Sir, some of the issues which we have raised in our Manifesto, they had advised us at that particular time that we should look to put some other things in place, before we put those proposals for the Manifesto on the table. I think that most people, certainly people of the senior leadership of the Teachers' Union of the nurses and of the police, who would have come to us out of CTUSAB, will also welcome this particular assessment.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F.L. CHANDLER: Thank you, Mr. President.

The Resolutions being debated seek to increase the salaries of a wide range of public officers. As long as the Government can afford these increases, I do not think it is unreasonable under the present circumstances of a rising cost of living. I also agree with Senator McClean that the free bus service for school children will certainly be a great additional help.

Mr. President, I think we also have to look at the other side of the coin, especially in these difficult times. I feel that a large number of public officers are not as productive, or are accountable as they should be. They do not seem to understand that it is their function to facilitate and not to hinder business. As I have said many times before in this Chamber and I will say it again, that Administrations may come and Administrations may go, but the mighty Civil Service is there to stay.

Ministers on many occasions have said, well some have said that they are treated like school boys, some have said that they have no authority over public officers. This may be so, to some extent, but Ministers do have the authority to enact legislation.

Mr. President, I feel that until there is some Administration which is strong enough and prepared to stand up to these public officers, and to change the rules of their employment, that we will not progress very much.

I feel that public officers who do not perform should not be transferred from Ministry to Ministry, or Department to Department. What is the point of transferring trouble from one place to another? I think that when they do not perform, they should be sent home. We need to get rid of this rut.

I think that public officers have too much job security and I really think that their conditions of service should be changed. I have always heard that I will never see that in my lifetime, but I will still lobby for it.

Mr. President, you write letters to Ministries and never hear a reply. When you ask about the issue and why you have not heard a reply, you hear that I have not gotten to that yet. It always seems to be at the bottom of a pile that never ends. Then, you will hear after many months that they cannot find the file, and then you have to start all over again, providing copies of everything that you have sent already.

In recent times, a response that I have been hearing to any question you ask is, "I have no idea". I think if they do not have any idea, they should not be in the job. Mr. President, I am not saying that all officers fall into this category because, obviously, that is not so. There are many officers who are really efficient and helpful, but they are in the minority.

Mr. President, there are departments like the NIS, where you can take hours to get through to the person that you need to speak to, and when you do get through to that desk, then you are answered by an answering machine. When you finally get through to the person, you explain the problem; they are to get back to you and weeks or months pass, and they do not get through to you and you have to start all over again. Sir, how can this be tolerated and continue to be tolerated?

Mr. President, at the Ministry of Agriculture there was a new phone system installed, I would say about a year ago, but most of the officers have not initialized their mail boxes, so that when you try to get in touch with them and they are not at their desk, and that is very often, you cannot leave a message. Therefore, if they do not understand how to initialize their mail boxes, one would think that they would try to find someone, who could tell them how to initialize the mail boxes. I have spoken about that to the Office of the Permanent Secretary but I have not seen anything happen.

As far as teachers go, I would hope that increases in salaries would attract people of a calibre needed to guide our young people, in spite of all the negative pulls in society, including their homes. We need committed teachers who are strong and can stand up for good principles and stem the tide of the indiscipline that we are seeing all around us.

Mr. President, while I agree that people should be well paid for the jobs they do, the system must ensure that they do their jobs well and failing that, I think they should be dismissed and not transferred.

As Senator McClean noted, wages and salaries are a large part of Government's expenditure. Therefore, we have to make sure that the Government gets value for its money.

I thank you, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Hutson.

SENATOR J. A. C. HUTSON: Mr. President, I rise to make a few short comments. I rise to support the Bill but I rise with mixed feelings. This percentage increase, I think, would be a guide throughout the island for private business for about the next two years. There are some businesses such as agriculture, that cannot pass on their costs. We are told what we are going to be paid, and I can see layoffs in the future, which I hate to think will come to pass.

12.50 p.m.

I have said that they definitely need the increase, but agriculture is going to have great difficulty in meeting this cost.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Hutson, I do not want to interrupt you, but could you shift your microphone a bit towards me so that Senators could hear a little better.

SENATOR J. A. C. HUTSON: Sorry Mr. President. That is really my concern at the moment. For small businesses, this is going to be a guide throughout the island. I am not sure if small businesses can afford it as they cannot pass on their cost. I am really speaking particularly to the sugar industry. I know they deserve the 6 per cent wage increase in the first year because the cost of living today, as we all know, is very high.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Benn.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, I rise to support the ombudsman Resolution. I want to first congratulate the Prime Minister and his advisors for the manner in which they were able to meet and reach the position with the workers' representative. It was not long and drawn out. There was no rancour or no war of words in the public domain. This has come at a time when we are recognising that other countries are laying off workers, and when larger and more developed countries are experiencing problems with their economies.

Mr. President, I am having one or two concerns. I share what Senator Dr. Francis Chandler has said. I would say it a little bit softer because Senator Chandler does not manage a ministry and probably would not be in a position to have to face the electorate at some other time.

Mr. President, I see a need for greater unity among unions. Even as the representatives in the Other Place met last night for long hours and agreed and passed the Resolution, I am still hearing that not all of the leadership of the unions are satisfied.

Mr. President, we have a Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados. From years gone by and leading up to this year, I get the impression that all is not well, and that the representatives do not always see eye to eye, particularly at times when they are negotiating for their workers. Mr. President, I look forward to the day when there appears to be greater unity among the various workers' representatives, especially those who say they belong to the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados.

Mr. President, I look forward as well to a better understanding from Members of the Opposition. I sat in the

Other Place last night, and from time to time one heard in the debate people calling for better conditions of work.

In previous debates, you would have heard that something has been happening for the last number of years and you would say to yourself that those who are now representing Her Majesty's Opposition were not so long ago, even this year, in Government.

Mr. President, I would like us to understand and recognise that this is Barbados. I remember that a few months ago when the oil prices were skyrocketing, people were hoping that they reach the levels where it appeared to me that they would create some sort of hardship for people. I am thankful to God that those prices have come crumbling down and we are able to pass on those savings that we have experienced back to the consumers.

Mr. President, I want people to recognise that we are a country. This is Barbados. Barbados does not belong to the Barbados Labour Party, or the Democratic Labour Party. I believe that when we are looking at things to take this country forward, that we need to be able to come together in unity, especially if what we put on the table is for the benefit of our people.

Mr. President, we talked about Public Sector Reform and the National Initiative for Services Excellence. Mr. President, as Senator Chandler was speaking, I had to point in the direction to what I was squibbing a little earlier. I would like to see an improvement in the system where there is constant appraisal of staff. I do not get the impression that there is this appraisal system in place where the performance of staff in the various Departments of the Ministries is measured.

I would like to see something happen that we could talk about and bring an end to poor and bad punctuality. Officers turn up for work at 8:00, 9:00, 10:00 and 11:00 o'clock when they have meetings to attend. A meeting might be called for 10:00 o'clock and they leave their desk at 10:10 o'clock to journey somewhere else for a meeting at 10:00 o'clock.

Mr. President, I turn now to regularity at work. I am not ashamed to say that from time to time - I know I would probably get some lashes for this - when you ask for certain officers, those in authority would say I have not seen that person for weeks. This could not happen in the private sector.

I have had a lot of years in private sector training and you could not have a director of a private sector company asking for an officer at whatever level and you are told that you have not seen that person for months and the person gets paid out of the purse. I have that sort of situation in my Ministry. You do not see some officers for

a very long time and when you ask where are they ... I would like to see officers spend more time on the job.

Senator Chandler indicated that she understands that Ministers do not have that kind of authority and sometimes when you go around and ask that question you get that impression. You hear: "but Minister you got to keep out of this". Sometimes you get the impression, Mr. President, that you are interfering when you seek to interface.

Mr. President, I have a habit from time to time calling for officers at 9:30 or 10:00 o'clock, or at 3.30 p.m. because I know those are the times when they are not available. They are probably not at work as yet at 9:30 or 10:00 o'clock and they would have left already to pick up their children at 3.30 p.m. That is not necessarily in my ministry, but I believe that this sort of situation happens throughout the system.

I, like Senator Chandler, would like to call on the Head of the Civil Service and all of us who have responsibility, Permanent Secretaries and all, to ensure that those public servants that we rely so heavily on for advice, et cetera, give a greater account of the time they spend on the job. Mr. President, every public servant ought to be able to look back on the day and to say with satisfaction that they have put in an honest day's work.

This increase that has been given is a pointer for the private sector. Whatever the increase is, the private sector would take note and would grant such increases to their people as well who have to work very hard to keep those shareholders happy.

Mr. President, this increase that we have provided is not only bringing joy and satisfaction to the public servants, but I am sure that it is going to serve as a pointer to those people who have to make decisions in the private sector.

1.00 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, with those few remarks, I would want to say that I am very happy to support the Resolution. I wish too that those public servants, who might have heard or read from a report, would not seek to be annoyed. Sir, we are not seeking to hold them up to ridicule but there is a cost to these increases. I would also want to say that these public servants ought to be in a position every day to say how good and pleasant it is to be at work today.

Mr. President, I thank you and I pray that God will continue to guide this Government.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Newton.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I do not want to detain lunch but there is one comment I want to make in relation to Senator Chandler's speech, and the comments by Senator Benn. Mr. President, I want to say that too frequently the behaviour of which both my colleagues spoke about is not addressed in the Ministries. There are redresses. These persons could be sent on leave, or they could be dismissed from the Service but what has to happen is that when this course of behaviour starts, the supervisors must write letters to the persons involved and make sure that at the end of the day there is a paper trail. Therefore, if the case goes where it has to go, if one is brought against that person, there would be evidence that person's attention has been drawn to his or her abominable behaviour, and that action has been taken. Otherwise, these persons would go on to do the same thing year after year and nothing would happen.

Mr. President, I thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended until 2.05 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.05 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

1.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is now resumed.

Senator Millington.

SENATOR the Rev. P.A.V. MILLINGTON: Good evening, Sir. I want to support this Resolution and say that I am very pleased with the proposal that the Government has put forward to the public workers of this country. One of the things that really struck me most was the fact that the negotiations took place in a very difficult time, in a climate of global downturn in the economy in many of the industrial countries, and I was wondering how we were going to afford the increase in salaries, in view of the fact that at that time oil was between US\$125 to US\$145 per barrel.

It is with great relief today that I could say that the price of oil has gone downwards and yet we were able to put forward something that was fair and equitable to the workers of this country. I believe even though every worker would like to have a 25 per cent increase in salary, or higher than that, the reality is that Government has to find the money to pay for this increase in salary.

Mr. Speaker, the fact has already been made that we have approved a 10.5 per cent increase in salary to workers, and this is the highest in 14 years, so we do not have to belabour that point. I believe it is coming at a good time.

4.10 p.m.

I believe it is coming at a good time. Most people in Barbados traditionally like to spruce up their homes around Christmas time. They like to buy little extras they did not have. I remember as a young man, living in Maxwell Coast Road, the only time of the year that we could afford a ham was around Christmas time.

I am sure that there are thousands of Barbadians who look forward to special treats that they are unable to afford during the year. I am sure this is going to be a welcomed fillip and it is sound financial prudence. We would like to give more but we are unable to give more than we can pay back.

I want to compliment this Administration on offering what I think is fair to the workers and the Government because, at the end of the day, we still have to manage the economy. We do not want to offer 15 or 25 per cent and then find in the month of March or April, if oil shoots back up to, let us say \$140 a barrel, we are unable to meet our monthly obligations to the Government.

I really am happy and I support this Resolution fully. I must compliment the NUPW for being fair and prompt, not messing around but getting the job done. It really shows me that they have the interest of the country at heart, even though some people were saying that we should get more money I would like to get five times the salary that I am getting in the Senate right now. I would love it, but the truth of the matter is, what can the Government afford? What is prudent and what is fair. So I support this Resolution 100 per cent.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Goddard.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Mr. President, I too support this Resolution but I must say this. When the terms of this Resolution were negotiated, conditions were not happy, but they were not as severe as they are now. I think that credit should be given to the Government and the credit union to arrive at this settlement of 10.5 per cent, 6 per cent in the first year and 4.5 per cent in the second year.

Asides.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Sir, I have had some of my friends ask me, when they know

that Ministers would be getting adjustments, do the Ministers deserve an increase? I have had to say "yes" because the cynical comment was, I see them getting fatter and doing a lot of travelling. Can they justify this increase? That is not all Ministers, but some of them stand out.

Sir, I say "yes" because I do not think the average person understands or appreciates the work, stress or pressure that Parliamentarians have to go through especially those who are Members of Cabinet. I do not think they really do. I did not, until I was first appointed to be a Member of the Senate, and I was quite surprised. So I had a learning experience and a lot of other people do not have it.

Sir, we have to make comparisons with the private sector as has been done already today. At the lower end, people in the public sector are paid generally higher rates than persons in the private sector, and this has been mentioned. As you go up the scale, persons in the public sector receive less than people in the private sector.

This is one of the results of this compression that we have heard so much about, whereas at the senior level, in the public sector, persons get roughly six times more than those at the bottom. This may be very attractive, politically, but in terms of economics it is not so smart because, in this day of specialisation, when you have to look for special skills within the public sector, you have to pay what the market demands, and that market includes the public and private sector.

In the private sector people, at the senior level have profit-sharing arrangements. They may have stock options in the company where they work, but this does not apply in the public sector. What has struck me in the public sector is, Ministers, as far as I know and I stand to be corrected, no provision is made for annual leave. I do not understand that, but I stand to be corrected if I am wrong. That is a rare anomaly. Also, Ministers have no pension schemes although they draw a pension, I am told, if as a minister they have been in a ministerial office for two terms.

Sir, I was very pleased to listen to what Senator Chandler, who spent all of her life in the private sector, as far as I know, and Senator Benn, who has spent most of his life in the private sector, shared their experiences and they were very critical, constructively so, of the behaviour within the public sector generally. It is not a question of competence. It is a question of attitudes.

Sir, we have a lot of long talk about job security but it only remains long talk, to use the common phrase, if there is no enforcement. In the private sector where you have more detailed budgeting, performance appraisal and setting up standards, non-performance means discipline and eventually dismissal.

Now dismissal is not something to be done lightly but, sometimes, there is no alternative. You have reached the stage where you have spoken to a person, you have warned them, given them additional training and they are still not performing, especially if they are coming to work and leaving by 3.00 p.m., as has been stated. That is one of the dangers of too much job security.

Sir, I think it was the Right Honourable Errol Barrow who referred to the civil servants as an army of occupation. They were made of asbestos. They were fireproof. That was wisdom. He must have had his frustration having to deal with that situation. I am sure that all subsequent Prime Ministers have had to deal with it including the incumbent Prime Minister. It is not good enough.

Sir, in the private sector, I am not claiming perfection for the private sector, but greater emphasis is placed on accountability, and transparency is important in both the public and private sector.

Mr. President, in these economic times, and I have spoken of a number of them here two weeks ago, but since then the situation has worsened. I do not know how many of you follow the Financial Times of London, or the Daily Telegraph. I follow them on the Internet, and it is scary what is being predicted down the road, and it has not affected us yet.

2.20 p.m.

I believe the Prime Minister of Trinidad has spoken to his Constituency twice about the dangers ahead. He would feel it because the price of oil has dropped so dramatically. I am not aware that any of our political leaders have made that appeal yet to the people of this country. I think that is overdue.

Sir, these increases that we are looking to approve will cost the Government, by that I mean the taxpayers of this country, \$65 million in year one and \$52 million in year two. I think the Government could send a very strong message to this community if it would consider deferring the implementation of the second stage of these increases. Nobody would be put out of work, but the Treasury would save \$52 million if they did that. I take no pleasure in suggesting this but, to me, this is to highlight the difficult times I see now and I see ahead.

Mr. President, as mentioned in here before, many construction projects have been put on the back burner or cancelled, even those at the earliest stage of construction. I am told the figure is something in excess of BDS\$1 billion.

Mr. President, Britain is our biggest tourism market. The way the Pound Sterling is going in relation to the US

dollar to which we are tied, only the very wealthy tourists from Britain will come. The effect of the decline in the Pound Sterling, has even greater significance. I believe it will affect the amount of foreign direct investment coming to this island, which pays for the construction and provides so much of the foreign exchange that our Government needs.

Mr. President, I am not trying to be an alarmist. I try to read the signs and I try to do my research thoroughly. These difficult times, in my opinion, would go through 2009 into 2010. I cannot see beyond that, but I see the next two years as very difficult. We have to make sure that we keep as many people as possible in jobs. This is Priority No. 1, even if the Government has to run an increased fiscal deficit to create employment, but drastic steps have to be taken.

Sir, it is not going to be an easy task. Some difficult and unpopular decisions will have to be made by the Minister of Finance and the Cabinet. I do not envy them but these decisions have to be made in the national interest. I pray that the powers that be will do their best to ensure that we get through these difficult times and move into calmer waters down the road.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Inniss.

SENATOR Miss P.I. INNISS: Mr. President, thank you for acknowledging me. I just want to make a few comments in support of this omnibus Resolution set out before us this afternoon to approve the Public Service General Orders and increases thereof.

Mr. President, I, like others, join in being extremely happy that these negotiations have been completed and settled very quickly. I also take note of the fact that these settlements represent the largest increase that has occurred in some 14 years, indeed, under a former Administration. Sir, the Central Bank, Standard and Poor and other agencies have termed them as responsible negotiations, taking into account, of course, high inflation. Sir, my comrade and others in the unions would often speak of the union's desire to protect the workers' purchasing powers and, looking at inflation rates as it relates to real wage increases. Therefore, we appreciate that responsibility.

Mr. President, I take into consideration, as has been spoken here today, of the uncertain times that we are in, the threatening economic stress and possible crisis. Sir, to say that all of these have weighed heavily on negotiations, I think is an understatement and that they have been resolved quickly, deserves commending on all Sides of the Table.

Mr. President, we note that the wage sector in the Public Service, as we have heard, is highly compressed. Therefore, salaries for those at the top are not commensurate with those elsewhere, and that is indeed a struggle. Therefore, the Government has a challenge in retaining competent professionals, but we also note, as has been said over and over again, that salaries at the bottom of the scale are, indeed, very competitive with those in the private sector.

Sir, as has been mentioned by Senator Chandler, Senator Benn and others, and will continue to be mentioned, because it is indeed a very important point - It cannot be laboured enough. This disconnect between those salaries at the bottom for those members of the Public Service and those in the Private Service, offers great concern.

Mr. President, I am looking forward to the day where the wage increase in the public sector has that great commensurate effect on the private sector and for those at the very bottom. Senator Marville mentioned it. It has been mentioned in the Other Place, and it will continue to be mentioned.

Mr. President, I rise to say the same because it is not only a repetition. I think Barbadians have to understand that when persons of civic duty and Parliamentarians speak of such concerns. In some cases, it is laboursing a point that has been said before but what is more important, Sir, it is repeating the echoes in your ears, that you hear on a daily basis, when you traverse areas of a Constituency where persons cannot make it.

I am hoping in my short discourse, not only to resound in your ear, Mr. President, and all those who are hearing the same thing that has been said before, but to probably transcend the desperation that a number of those persons in the private sector who are working for, as Bajans say, next skin to nothing, and the need for a society, the need for a government, the need for all caring persons to come to their aid.

Sir, too many of your young women, persons I know are going home with nothing. I have said it before and I will continue to say that. Many complain and say, I am working to keep sane, not necessarily to pay bills, because it does not stretch. Many tell me they have the scenario where they do not have the income, so they put the bills in a bag, shake the bag, pick out one of the bills and whichever bill comes to their hand, that is the bill they pay because that is the only recourse they have.

When asked: "How do you pay the other bills?" They answer: "Well, you know".

Asides.

SENATOR Miss P.I. INNISS: Mr. President, it is true. I have three or four friends and I have heard persons jesting about it, but it is not a jest. Friend X pays the water bill. Friend Y pays the telephone bill, and I do X, Y and Z to be able to support these two children and hope welfare can help me with a third.

These are persons, not always women, Indeed, a large percentage of them are persons who I am sure many Parliamentarians on Both Sides - I would argue they are more caring on This Side - but I have my biases. Mr. President, this is the reality that we are living with. This is not a parliamentary discourse.

Mr. President, there are too many persons within our society who are working for salaries or wages - do not let us call it disguised unemployment; do not let us call it any pretty terms - and they are not making it. They find any form.

2.30 p.m.

SENATOR Miss P. I. INNISS: There are young men who come to me and say Senator Inniss, I have X and Y "O" Levels, I have an "A" Level. You think I want to do this to earn a living? In honour of this Senate, I would not tell you what it is they do. These are the realities.

At the same speed at which these negotiations were settled, I have to remain hopeful and think that we have a government who can, in like manner, find some solutions. We must realise that this is not a matter of a public debate in a Lower or Upper House, but this is the reality.

The wage increases in the public sector at the lowest scale have to be demonstrated to some effect greater than \$50 or \$100 a week to those persons in the private sector.

Mr. President, another issue burns my heart because these things are heart-rending. This is where we have reached in this society. I have heard two Honourable Senators speaking this afternoon about the issue - I sometimes do not like to call the word - of Public Sector Reform and their concerns.

I join with Senator Benn and, rather than speaking solely of professional performance issues within our public sector and our private sector, I am hoping that at the same speed at which these negotiations were resolved, goodly Members of Government can say we have to really attack the issue of public sector mal-performance. We have to say what can we do. There are either one or two ways we can do it.

Mr. President, there are some civil servants who are the most exemplary workers on This Side of the hemisphere. I am happy to say that I have come across

some. This morning I called a civil servant to ask her a question. She was on her way to work. She said: "Senator Inniss, I am not there yet", and I could hear her literally babbling for help. She jumped out of the car and rushed into her office to get data that I was asking on just general information.

She cartwheeled to assist. I heard it over the phone. She asked a comrade and he too was jumping over, not because of the term "Senator" or not because of a position, but because there are a lot of civil servants who want to make a valuable contribution to this country. There are a lot who have a lot to offer, who are bright, who know a lot of the problems and a lot of solutions, and any opportunity they are given to shine and to make a difference they are there 200 per cent.

Mr. President, within that context, we have a civil service with a lot of great minds. On the converse, we also have members of the Public Service who are often, unfortunately, in authoritative or superior roles to some who can do twice and three times their... Mr. President, I am not ashamed to say it. That has been my experience.

Mr. President, the question is how do we deal with issues within the private sector in a similar manner that we have dealt with wages in the public sector. Mr. President, because it is dollars and cents and it is a simple situation, barring negotiations on a number of issues, we are dealing with personalities and with productivity. A Service Excellence Award has not solved the problem, so how then can we address those issues?

I constantly return to the point of the speediness in which it probably can be done. Can a Government look at ways of dealing with a public sector? I think that the main problem which has confounded or caused issues as regard to service excellence is that clear targets, time courses, requirements and deliverables, have not been identified.

Therefore, you can say we have specific problems in specific areas. We identified that the public sector is not a uniformed body. There are differences and therefore we need to identify persons who can clearly articulate what the problems are, how problems can be resolved or attempts to do so, not in one grand pie in the sky about service excellence, but in clear defined terms, deliverable terms and courses, and set those maybe as a way to go.

There are a number of sections in the public sector which are working excellently. What we need to do is to call those persons who are in charge, have a committee of only those, and on recommendations of their performance bring them into a cohort. Even in the private sector, there are some businesses that I am thinking of who have excellent workers and whose managerial skills are exemplary. We need to set clear defined targets, not in an

attempt to intimidate, frustrate or to send home civil servants, but in an attempt to let Barbadians realise that we are indeed in crisis.

Barbadians have to be the craftsmen of their fate. When we talk about crises and about needing to hold constraints and to increase capital works and find jobs for persons, we speak of all areas in which we have to generate revenue, develop income and buffer the storms. Mr. President, the biggest buffer we have is to improve productivity, to improve skills and to make Barbadians more accountable. That needs to be of greatest concern to this country.

Mr. President, the speediness at which we were able to negotiate and have a settlement... I would love to see a certain amount of urgency placed on such. I am looking forward to the day, as Senator Walters spoke this morning, of hopefully the intervention of a Minimal Wage Act and for the transcending of that information because a lot of persons out there do not really understand a lot of these Acts. They figure that these amendments are for persons in Parliament Buildings. They do not often translate what is being done here with what occurs in their homes.

I am sure that many of the young women and men that I see on a daily basis - and now this is Christmas time I am going to see 20 times more - have no idea that there is a Protection of Wages Act, nor what it means. Many times they said: "What to do, the little I have is gone, I do not know where it has gone. They have no idea of certain recourses that they have, so we have a responsibility to educate them on what are their recourse.

Our example should not only be in quick settlements but in a productivity with marked, defined goals so that they can be assessed and whatever recourse is needed...

Mr. President, I am sure that any good leader wants to develop personnel, but personnel have to realise that if they do not want to develop and all has been done, you know what your recourse is. We have too much in the Public Service. It cannot continue. We have to have a productivity level in this country across the board. We have to deal with the issue of wages in this country for those persons who are not making it.

Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sandiford-Garner.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, today I stand in support of this Resolution. I would just like to note, as I start, that it must be recognised that this Barbados Government would have put forward the initiative to start the negotiations after realising that the public sector wage protocol had expired since March.

Government called the unions to the table in July and asked them to discuss the wage settlement on behalf of the public servants, and I think that needs to be noted. The unions did not do it, Government did it because the Government felt that the delay would not have been in the best interest of the workers of this country.

Mr. President, it must also be noted that in the Estimates for 2008-2009, this Government would spend approximately \$1 billion in public sector wages.

2.40 p.m.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: This includes the wages for workers in statutory corporations, whose salaries have to come from the Consolidated Fund. Mr. President, \$1 billion is no small amount coming from an economy such as ours. However, despite what might have been said here and in other places about the productivity of the public sector, Government understands that salaries are increased to maintain the purchasing power of workers and to allow them to share in productivity gains. There are some public sector employees who work and produce.

Mr. President, much has also been said about the cost of living and its relationship to the salary increases. In another place and in here, it was touched on. Sir, I would wish to share some statistics on public sector wage increases, as they relate to inflation over the past three years. Sir, at the height of our so-called prosperity three years ago, the nominal percentage increase was 3 per cent, while the inflation was 7 per cent. In 2006, the nominal percentage increase was 7.5 per cent, while inflation rate was 6 per cent. Last year the nominal percentage increase was 2.5 per cent, while inflation was 4.1 per cent. In July, 2008, the Governor of the Central Bank projected inflation to be at a level of 8 per cent, so thus the 6 per cent we are proposing in the first year. The 6 per cent increase in year one, I consider to be a considerate and sober approach to public sector salaries, at this time, in this environment. Therefore, the unions and Government agencies involved should be commended for the balanced manner in which they have approached these negotiations.

Mr. President, I have heard much negativity attributed to the process at another time and in another place. Sir, unfortunately, we have no Opposition Senators here today, which I would like to note because I am uncomfortable with it. I do not know if it is in my place to speak about it but I consider that if we have two Opposition Senators, at least one should be in this Honourable Senate at all times.

Sir, for both Opposition Senators to be absent from this Honourable Senate, I think, undermines the democratic process. I think we need to treat this Chamber with more

seriousness than we are treating it. We have heard an excuse from one Honourable Senator, I have not heard an excuse from the other. Sir, again I do not know if it is in my place but I see myself as a sitting Senator who respects this Honourable Chamber and so I expect other Honourable Senators would respect it.

Mr. President, I would want to tell those who would wish to attribute negative to negotiations that, in my interactions on the ground, I have recognised that public servants have been expecting their salary increases and are pleased with the outcome.

Sir, I will give an anecdotal example. Yesterday, I went to my office at Bay Street and an employee asked me: "Ma'am, are you all sitting tomorrow?" I said: "Yes, I think so. Why, do you have something to do tomorrow?" She said: "No Ma'am, I would like my money." Sir, on the ground, the public sector has not complained about the settlement, and I think we need to be in touch with our people more to be more positive and have accurate feedback from them when we speak.

Mr. President, I would want to say that we must remember that the National Union of Public Workers, which would have negotiated with Government, represents 70 per cent of public servants. Therefore, if there had been any rumours or murmurs to the contrary, I am sure we would have heard them by now.

Mr. President, I would want to say that the National Union of Public Workers has a duty to protect the purchasing power of its members, and that this Government has a responsibility to be fiscally prudent, and we have to remember the environment in which we are in at present. Sir, both entities have reached a balance, an amount that is fair to the public servants and an amount that is fair, just and safe for the Government. That is what is called responsible negotiations. There were no long, drawn-out negotiations. There was no acrimony, and we have come to a balance.

Mr. President, it is my opinion that never again must this country be manipulated into displaying the fiscal irresponsibility that marked previous regimes. We now have a responsibility to our children to manage this country more responsibly. Mr. President, I would wish to applaud the Government and the Union for their level-headed approach and would wish that this tone and temper continue.

Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I am quite pleased to be able to speak this evening on a matter

that is not contentious for once, and one that seems so right to be enacted at the present time. Mr. President, the negotiations between one union and the Government has yielded a settlement that I think is timely and necessary. I believe it shows that this Administration is working in the interest of the people of Barbados.

It is necessary, given all the discussions we have had on the economic crisis and other issues facing our economy, that we continue to make sure that we stimulate that economy; that we encourage the development of that economy; that we ensure that the people of Barbados continue to live at a certain standard and that they continue to maintain a standard of life to which they are accustomed.

Mr. President, I listened as other Honourable Senators spoke and my concern is that we do not get too caught up and too happy with the fact that we have done something for some, but that we must do for the many. Sir, it is now a case that the Government of Barbados has set the bar. We have led by example and said this is where we are going and that now it is time for the private sector to follow. It is necessary for us to address a number of issues and there are many different ways of going about it. Sir, we do not want to narrow ourselves. Sir, the point is that we have to start looking at making sure that more people in Barbados have a base level of income on a monthly basis.

We have heard the concerns from several Honourable Senators and we hear the concerns also on a daily basis from members of the public. It is now necessary, even though we are looking at a crisis and getting past that crisis, that we need to start looking at developing now and not in the future. I believe that for far too many years we have seen the benefits of a good economy, but that we did not utilise them efficiently nor effectively.

It is sad that in this period of crisis we can now see the largest single increase in the last 14 years. It is of concern to me that in the period of greater economic and fiscal benefit and bounty, that more was not done to ensure that those at the lower end of the spectrum were also benefitting. It is of concern, also, that it is now a necessity that we come and in such large measure, try to address things such as the increased cost of living and other factors that now have the citizens of Barbados under consistent pressure.

Mr. President, in terms of today's argument, what we are looking at is the need where we are more consistent in the future, where the disparity between the lowest levels of the private sector and public sector is not so great, and that we find ways of increasing the incomes of those people at the lowest levels of the private sector.

In addition, I would like to speak to the issue that my colleague Senator Chandler referred to, in terms of the productivity of workers in Government. I believe that, as with most other things, it comes back to management and utilising the powers and scopes that you have.

2.50 p.m.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, one thing I would like to hear more discussion on, for instance, is the practice in our neighbouring island of Trinidad of hiring contract officers. Sir, again speaking from a position of youth, it is interesting to note that while many years ago people looked to go into the Civil Service and stayed there permanently, it is not necessarily the goal of young people today. They would like to be able to come into the Civil Service, but it is not necessary to stay in the Civil Service permanently.

Sir, contract officers would allow us to pull in people without much of the burden of having them appointed, let them work for a period of two years to three years, offer their services and if so, the service can be renewed, but at some agreed upon time, we can part ways and that offers the Government flexibility.

Mr. President, innovations like these are necessary. There are other countries and Governments that have looked at public sector reform and there are areas where we can take and adapt to the Barbadian context, where it would be beneficial for the people of Barbados and the Government and we would all see benefits coming from it.

Mr. President, I believe that the concept that we are looking at today goes wider than just wages. We are trying to get wages in place so that we could develop the standard of living in Barbados but we need to look now beyond this simple package and look at the general concept of what we are going to do with wages in the country, make sure that they are rationalised and less arbitrary.

We have to make sure that we get to the point where, unfortunately, there are people in this country who work for less than \$200 per week and are supporting families, which is not realistic. It is not something that most university graduates are ever going to understand, but then, there are segments of the population, who for our ability to make education so pervasive in our society, still have not been able to effect and still have not been able to empower to make their situations better.

It is our role then, not just to look at the plight of the civil servants and the members of the Civil Service, but to look at the entire country; to look at forming ways where we can, by our part, develop the civil service but also encourage the private sector to match what we are doing. I

believe this is one of the most important aspects we have to face.

It has been said here already that the Civil Service has a very high bar for the minimum earnings that a civil servant would make. We cannot say that for the private sector and there are many people that we need to make sure are not continuing to exist in squalor and a very bad situation; a negative situation. Mr. President, we need to make sure that we start to pull everyone in the society up for the benefit of the society.

Mr. President, I will leave on this note. We could look to some of our neighbours, once again, to see the problems that arise when there become a drastic disparity in the level of incomes. You see greater issues in terms of crime because I, as a university educated member of society, am certain that after years of education, many young people develop a sense of entitlement.

When I do my part, when I develop myself, there must be a process afterwards. When you are creating well-educated minds but not finding a niche for them, they will find a niche for themselves and there is nothing you should fear more than a well-educated criminal, so we need to start looking at making sure that we have the space and the growth potential to accommodate this development and the increase in the wages of our population that we would like to see.

Mr. President, I thank you very much for the time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Alleyne.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I took long and thought very hard about some of the things I may say and will say in this debate. Sir, wages negotiations for public officers have always been political. The Opposition says pay more and the Government cries scarcity and this has been the tradition but never, Sir, over the last 10 years that I have been working at the National Union of Public Workers, has anybody questioned the integrity of the Union that engages in those negotiations. Therefore, to sit in a Chamber and to hear people that ought to know better question the integrity of people, makes it difficult for me to stand in this Chamber and to do my responsible thing.

Sir, I also have to respond to things, not said in this Chamber. They were not going to stand in here and say it, but they took the airwaves, and in the Other Place, to question the integrity of people.

Mr. President, a lot of pieces of data were passed around here about statistics and how much percentage was received in 2003 and 2006 and, Sir, I can recite all of that because I was part of several of those negotiations, but I

want to pick one year in particular, the year 2003, when we had a three-year agreement; 2 per cent; 3 per cent and 3 per cent for three years. Sir, that came about because the Government of the day said to the public officers that things were so tight that the Government needed an additional year.

We had not for 14 years negotiated a three-year agreement and Government, through its public officers said that it needed some elbow room; that things were getting a little dicey and that it needed a little space; to give it instead of the normal two years, give it three years. Sir, over three years, we did not get 10 per cent. It was 2 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent.

Sir, to protect the workers, the National Union of Public Workers said it wanted an accelerator clause included so that if the cost of living goes beyond 5 per cent the workers would get a payment between 5 per cent and wherever it goes. Mr. President, it went to 7 per cent and we had to fight to get the 2 per cent. Sir, that is why the negotiations of that year took five meetings because the first four meetings were used to fight for an agreement, and at the next meeting, we settled everything.

Mr. President, I have heard other trade unions say that we settled too quickly, that we negotiated in bad faith and, Sir, I am very hurt that we do not have an Opposition today because I came prepared for the Opposition and for Honourable Senators to debate this issue, and I am sorry they are not here. Sir, it makes me feel that I have to debate by myself.

MR. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, you only have to address the Chair. That is all you have to do. You do not have to debate with anybody.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, thank you very much. Sir, I heard that the National Union of Public Workers and the Public Service and, by implication, the public officers negotiated in bad faith. The negotiations for the last settlement 2006-2008 took three meetings and there was not a call about bad faith. The one before that took five meetings and, as I have said before, four meetings were used to fight over 2 per cent.

What the public officers of this country that people continue to ridicule did, was to ensure we did not spend a year's debate on salaries and negotiations, brought the Minister of Finance to the first meeting, and gave us a broad picture of what the projections of the economy were so that when we negotiated, they asked if we wanted 20 per cent and they said what was the picture.

3.00 p.m.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: We have reduced the time it takes to negotiate down to two or three meetings, because Both Sides understand what we are playing with. We trust the Central Bank and if they say it is going to be rosy we go up, and if they say if it is not going to be rosy we cool out. Sir, when people keep saying that we are settling too quickly, it is because the public officers, of which people keep saying are negative have been able to adjust the programme so that we reduce what we call negotiating times. That is why it took only three meetings.

Sir, for the first time in about 10 years the Government offered 7 per cent in its opening offer. All the other times it was 2 per cent, and we had to start from 2 per cent to get it up to 10 per cent the last time. It started at 2.5 per cent and we ended up at 10 per cent. The Government offered 2.5 per cent and we took three meetings. This Government offered 7 per cent in its opening statement so we did not have a lot of negotiating to do because we recognised what was going to happen, and people are walking about talking about bad faith.

Sir, the lowest paid public worker earns about \$460 a week. A clerical officer with a first degree gets about \$700 a week, about \$2 800 a month. A maid, like my mother would get \$460, and they are telling us and the National Union of Public Workers that we are to negotiate for the people at the bottom, ask more for them and forget the ones in the middle, not recognising that if we pull the bottom up too quickly, nobody wants to go to the middle, and if we pull the middle up too fast, nobody wants to go to the top.

Sir, in 2002, the job evaluation was to correct that. It cost the Government over \$70 million to correct that. Sir, what hurts me is, some of the people who are now talking with non informed information, were part of the Evaluation Committee. Some of the same people were part of that Committee that sat down and moved the ratio from about 5:1 back to about 6:3.

Sir, we can go a little further. A person at S8 was getting \$22 less than somebody at S6. Would you want to be a supervisor for \$20? Does it make sense? Why would a man at the Ministry of Transport and Works want to be a supervisor on the road for \$10 a week more? That is the challenge for a public service union. Sir, I forgive the Honourable Senator Trotman because he had a very small number of people to represent in the Public Service so he does not understand.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, I forgive any person who advances that argument out of ignorance. If you move a person by 30 per cent at the bottom, you have to move the middle, and if you move the middle it is going to confuse the top. If you spent \$70 million to correct it

five years ago - we agreed that we are not going back to it until about eight years because you do not want to spend money again on the same confusion, and every minute you hear people who ought to know better making the same point. I forgive them, Sir. I hope that it is not just political grandstanding.

Sir, I have to come to a more substantive issue, the employment culture in Barbados, because we keep knocking the public sector. Sir, I was sharing at the lunch table with my colleague. I went to a store in town to buy six screws, a big conglomerate in Barbados, to fix a radio, and I told the clerk that I would like six screws and his reply was: "Go round there". Now if that were a public officer, it would have been poor service. Sir, it gets worse. I went around there and came back with these six screws...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Twisty and Twirly were two screws.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, I am not talking about those kind of screws. I am talking about the ones you have to use with a screwdriver.

Sir, I came back with those screws, which cost about 62 cents. They gave an inventory and there was a sheet of paper I am sure costing about 10 or 15 cents. I thought that was all. I then had to take it to the cashier and the cashier put it through, pax pax pax, more paper. Sir, for less than a dollar, the time spent to purchase those screws could never be productive, but if it were a public service entity everybody would be quarrelling, but when it comes to the Public Service it must be 'hippy toopy toopy'.

Sir, do you know why? It is a culture of employment where managers at every level believe they must boss and they are not accountable to anyone whether it is in the private sector or public sector, and the many who work for nothing have to follow orders, not to respond to an environment that builds productivity and good service. That is what is required, and no one wants to touch it because if you interfere with the public sector, you have to interfere with the private sector, because workers in the public sector do not live in Japan, and the private sector live in Israel. It is an employment culture that is about "bossism" and stepping on billions. We have to change that attitude to workers.

Sir, you have men at the Ministry of Transport and Works, and people make fun at it. If you order a load of marl to patch a road, and the workers are out there waiting for the marl and the marl does not come, nobody quarrels about the inefficiency in the ordering. They pass and see the workmen with the shovels and they abuse them. You cannot patch the road if the marl is not there. When you get to the Ministry the Order Book is not present because the person who was to order it because they did not have the

money. So nobody wants to touch the structure. Everybody wants to kill the worker. Sir, when you ask every man Jack in this room: "Do you work hard?" Each man says "yes".

Sir, you go the University of the West Indies and ask the lecturers if they work hard. They say "yes", but every year you hear complaints about the students we are turning out, but every Lecturer at that University works hard. Every Lawyer in town works hard. Mr. President, I said that you worked hard at the University, yet we are producing very bad students.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, that is the crux of the matter. What is wrong with the structure of the University? What is wrong with the structure of the Public Service? Sir, we are spending money on something called Public Sector Reform where there are no measurables. There is no means of verifying what it is we want to achieve. We want to use the same model across all Ministries, across all Departments as though they are interchangeable.

The Ministry of Agriculture needs a special reform package for agriculture. Housing needs its own programme and project designed to fit the needs of Barbadians and the ability of Government to produce what is required. You cannot use the same model for both of them. Yet, the last 15 years was just empty talk, a waste of money and political grandstanding about Public Sector Reform. A lot of slogans, a lot of written up pretty paper and no progress. Sir, when you build up expectations of the public, you are telling them we are changing it, and after 15 years there is no change, you have to start over, and to build enthusiasm again is difficult.

Sir, I watched this Government struggling to change a culture where everything depends on a Prime Minister or a Minister to try to build participating democracy, to build leadership that is transformational against transactional. I see them struggle, but it always has to come back to what the Minister says. They do not recognise anybody else. They want the Minister or the Prime Minister because for 15 years that is what it has been, so to change that is difficult but it has to change.

3.10 p.m.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, the only way the public sector is going to perform properly is if we have transformational leadership, where people participate, rather than take directives and instructions and to wait on one man and one woman to say: "Go". It is hard, but if you build that kind of culture environment, whoever encourages

it will struggle, because everybody wants what is in it for me, and they are going to step on each other to get whatever crumbs are available.

Sir, this is not only about public sector salaries, because I know the Opposition already went to the bank and made arrangements to spend their change. It is not about that, Sir, because we understand the political games, but I have a problem with any person questioning the integrity of public officers who have performed the same function for 15 years.

I could call his name, Sir, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of the Civil Service is a decent, hardworking loyal public officer, Mr. Fitts. He worked and for the last four negotiations, he has changed the whole culture of negotiations. He has made it real. You enjoy going to him because you get an education as well. You get to understand how the Central Bank works and how the economy works. Sir, you get slide shows, or go into graphs. He brings in all the best people in Barbados to present the economic outlook. Therefore, we negotiate then with a better frame.

I am saying that when we come to these Chambers, both This Side and the Other Side, we can play politics.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: I am This Side, Sir. I am speaking to my President. In spite of what I was told just after my father died, I still believe that you are a gentleman.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I can make arrangements for the Deputy President to be in the Chair, so that you will be more comfortable in these matters.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: I am comfortable with you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Very well, press on.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, I just want to make a few points to this Chamber.

Sir, between S1 and S9, the senior scales in the Public Service, there are 1 035 people, and to adjust the salaries by, let us say, 5 per cent, normally cuts a big chunk, but we have to address those groups again so that we can deal with the middle and the bottom. Sir, this is not the environment for interfering with that level, because if you do that, the bottom would shout again, but you cannot move the bottom now, Sir, if you do not move the top.

I heard the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, my colleague, Sir, complaining that we cannot recruit finance officers, economic advisors and technicians to do his work.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: I am saying, therefore, that any responsible union, Sir, particularly one that represents public officers, and one that understands that each officer has a right to the best standard of living in Barbados, and that if you need to build a competitive nature in the public sector, then there must be steps for progression. When you have a ratio of 6.3:1, it creates problems.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, I was going to beg you to give me some other people's time, but I would not do it to you.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You will look after your end and I will look after mine.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. President, I have to turn back to this question of bad faith because I have to represent my Party and I also have to represent workers. Sir, I do not know if I have to make this a document of the Senate, but I have the Minutes of the Meeting between the Ministry of the Civil Service and the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB), held on October 20, 2008 in the conference room in the Ministry of the Office of the Civil Service. I will be guided by you, Sir.

Sir, sometimes you may have to bring points that may be embarrassing to some, but the truth must be told. When I heard, bad faith, and that negotiations stopped, and that the NUPW signed before people were ready, I want to read an extract from these Minutes, page 2 and I quote:

"The President of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados thanks the Chairman for welcoming him and his delegation to the meeting. He indicated that these were not easy times and anyone who would suggest otherwise, was not in touch with reality. He said that he did not consider that the Ministry of the Civil Service and the CTUSAB to be negotiating any wage increases since as far as the Congress was concerned, those talks were taking place at a higher level."

Sir, this is the CTUSAB that is walking around saying that they were bad faith negotiations, telling the Chief negotiator of the Government that they were not negotiating with the Chief Negotiator sent by the Government and then walked about Barbados saying that the negotiations were done in bad faith; and did not turn up to anymore meetings. Mr. President, it is painful and it has to be said.

Mr. President, I really want this copied and distributed to all the Members. Mr. President, I would be grateful if this could be made available to all of the Members.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, all you have to do is to make it a document of the Senate, which is your privilege.

Are you making it a document of the Senate?

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Yes, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Permission has been made to make it a document of the House. Please lay it with the Clerk, and if it is a document of the Senate, automatically, all Senators will receive it, Sir.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. President, this brings me to the substantive point about the people at the bottom. Sir, I have said in this Chamber on my first presentation that I take no satisfaction from saying that the amendment to the Shops Act was a mistake. It changed Sunday to an open day, making Sunday back to Sunday the same rate. Therefore, all workers in shops get the same \$5 per hour; and you stretch the whole week from Sunday to Saturday. Sir, if an employer had a wage bill of, let us say, \$1 000, what some of the bad employers would do - because I do not lump the private sector the same, the same way I do not lump the private sector as one.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, they took a wage bill of \$1 000 - I am drawing a "for instance" - and divided that wage bill over seven days, among five more employees. Let us say they increased their employment, but what they did was to give workers 30 hours, 32 hours, 24 hours, so that some of those young ladies you see walking past these Chambers going west, work 24 hours or 32 hours at \$5 an hour. Sir, my arithmetic tells me that $32 \times 5 = \$1.60$; subtract National Insurance of \$21.75 from that. You come to approximately \$139.25.

3.20 p.m.

This is Barbados, and this is the real bottom that wants representing. Sir, if they take out a cheese cutter or a pack of Shirley biscuits and a J-u-C per day for about \$3.00, I gone low, because they cannot afford anything else out of that, and bus fare of 10 journeys by \$1.50, that is \$15.00 for busfare, that is about \$30.00, so they are down to \$100.00 and they have not yet dealt with rent. It is a good thing that this Government gave them free rides for their children otherwise some of them would be dead already.

Sir, you have to get a cell phone in 2008. We have not even gotten to those things yet, and I have not talked about clothes or buying food, deodorant and soap yet. I am talking about getting to work. When they take out those things they are down to about \$60.00 in disposable income and then they have to pay rent. This is the Barbados we are living in.

We have people who are representing workers who are working for those salaries, and they are not saying anything about those workers, but are walking about quarrelling about people who are getting \$460 a week. I want them to quarrel about the gas station attendants. Sir, I get in the habit that if I put in \$10 in gas I will put in a little \$2 and if I get \$1.38 I tell them to keep the change because I know that if they are short, it is subtracted from their minimum wage. The unions that represent the private sector, whether it is the BUT, BSTU, BWU or any of them, have a responsibility to do something about that.

Mr. President, I know that some sectors would say they cannot afford it, but there are ways to deal with it. Every year the last Government gave back \$500 and said that was enough, so you had people lining up all down the Wharf... Sir, do you remember the Mottley days when you used to go in Queen's Park to beg for food and alms? Those days of going into Queens Park to beg for food and alms have returned.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not familiar with those days.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: People were being treated as though they were begging for something. That \$500 rebate was treated as though you were doing them a favour and some of them were made to feel ashamed that they were going for it. Sir, not a word came from that union and they are walking about talking about the National Union of Public Workers. In the 1970s, we asked for 30 per cent at the bottom to get them to where they are.

Sir, I get emotional about this. I do not even want to turn to the hotel sector where the service charge is now taken and used to pay for breakage and pilferage, and unions are representing those workers.

Mr. President, I do not do it now, but when I used to travel I used to like souvenirs from the hotels I stayed at. Sir, I am a very honest fellow. Sir, whenever I was leaving I would leave with a glass. I do not smoke but I would leave with an ashtray. What the unions are allowing the hoteliers to do is to take breakage and pilferage out of the service charge.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: I stopped doing it because I know who get to feel it now. Those things need to be dealt with. Those are the issues that a progressive union working for private sector workers must address.

Sir, special rates must be paid for night work. People work day shift and night shift and get the same rate in the private sector. That is unheard of in industrialised countries. That is what the other union should be fighting for and leave the public sector to the public sector union.

Sir, about 34 per cent of our employment force work down at that level who get less than \$200 per week. We have people in call centres. I heard my colleague Senator Inniss insinuate an issue that I speak to every month. I do a presentation on rewards and discipline for public officers. It is a very difficult session to do because you are talking to your employers about changing attitudes so that we could build a reward system that is really adequate for the year 2020, so you have to be sometimes speaking harshly about some of the things that are reported to the unions.

One of the things I have to constantly say to them is to write for me on the board three reasons why they get up every morning and go to work. Each officer is asked to write on a piece of paper three reasons why they go to work. Sir, if I tell you some of the reasons that are given you would be shocked. Some of the reasons given are to get out of boredom, to be independent, for money and I have nothing else to do. Those are some of the answers. I am being practical and some of them mean it.

Sir, when you examine the challenges that they face, you would understand some of the answers because I made the point to them that the lady I talked about a while ago who works at Matouks, or Cave Shepherd, or one of those stores in sales cannot be going to work for the money otherwise she would stay home because, at the end of the week, her total spending power is minus.

Mr. President, I say this to this Senate with all straight face and thing, that most of the people say that those girls have to have more than one boyfriend, that they have one for the hairdo, one for the drop and one for the food. This is Barbados.

Sir, we spent about \$36 million over the last three years on HIVAIDS. This is Barbados, fellow Senators, that the perception is given that to survive for over 34 per cent of our workers is to have companions who could help them with their bills.

Sir, it gets worse. For the public officers that the people have been talking about in here that do not work, if you are a nurse or a policeman you cannot get a mortgage on your salary. You have to get married, get a partner and beg your mother or your father.

I want Honourable Senators to get on top of what the environment is that we are talking about. It is not as rosy dosy as people want us to believe. This Government has inherited a situation that it has to walk very carefully, but it has to deal with it. Sir, people tell me that their mother did not used to get anything and therefore they can understand what I am talking about. They told me that their mother worked for 3 cents and their father worked for 5 cents and all kinds of stories, as though the reality for a police officer, a constable at \$2 400 a month, is a comfortable one.

Sir, the National Union of Public Workers - I am coming home on this - has an Executive and a Council and every time negotiations come up...

Sir, the reason why our things were sent later is because the General Secretary was out for a little while. We do not like to do stuff unless he or the Deputy is around. Our Council meets and invites the Central Bank of Barbados, the Ministry of Finance and social workers to come to the union to discuss wages negotiations. Sir, every year we are given parameters not less than. If it gets to this margin, we have to come back to the Council.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. President, when the Executive meets, it is recommended to the Council that this is what Government is offering, and we invite the Council to come back with a decision. If they are not all comfortable with that decision, then we invite all the members to come.

Mr. President, this time we did not have to do that, but at the time of the 2-2-3, the unions came and they agreed on 2-3-3. It was never the General Secretary, the Deputy President or the Executive, who made those decisions, yet you hear people saying that this body or the next body "sell" out.

Mr. President, the National Union of Public Workers is not a one-man union where all roads lead to one person. We are very democratic. We invite our members to engage us and engage themselves. We represent general workers and Permanent Secretaries, the Heads of all sections and

unions. Some persons are represented in terms of rights. We do not negotiate salaries for the ones at the top, but in the case of the Sanitation Service Authority, we represented the General Manager on the basis of rights because his rights were being violated.

Mr. Speaker, we have a wide gamut of members on our unions, and they come and sit and educate us as to what to ask for, how to ask for it and how to approach it. Sir, they help us in our presentation, so that when we get before the Government team, we would not be too far apart.

Sir, I say that because there is this perception that the Deputy General Secretary of the National Union of Public Workers should not be sitting in this Honourable Senate. Sir, when I heard that, I smiled and I wondered because members of other unions have been in here for over 50 years, and that has never been a question. Therefore, I am wondering if it is the individual, the policy or the principle taken.

Sir, I say to this august Chamber that as long as I am here, I represent This Side and will make sure that I stand on principle. Once I stand on principle I will never go wrong because every union in this country has been founded on the backs of workers. As long as one stays on principle, one cannot go wrong, especially whenever I address the President of the Senate, I will always stand on principle.

Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, we would have heard from Members on the Government's Side and from Independent Senators about the process through which the negotiations would have gone and the support for the decision with respect to public servants' salaries.

In terms of the context of which I spoke of, the macro context, we also would have heard from fellow Senators about what I would call the micro context, the context in which negotiations took place.

The integrity of that process has certainly been demonstrated to have been very much intact. We have also heard of Government's initiatives in the face of the expiration of the previous contracts to use its initiative and to prompt the other parties to negotiate.

I also believe it is important to register for the record the culture of negotiations, because I believe that Barbados has an honourable reputation in respect of how we do business on several fronts, not least of which is the industrial relation process. I, therefore, believe that when

we look at the process from the perspective of Government, it would seem to have been a timely one. It was one which recognised that any negotiations on the behalf of workers should not be subjected to the whims and fancies of individuals, but should be one in which parties come to the table with a sense of responsibility and good faith.

Therefore, when proposals are put on the Table, they are not there to be haggled about, but are put there, recognising what is seriously offered or could be offered, or what is seriously expected. I, therefore, believe it is necessary to compliment all those parties that took part in the negotiations.

I expressed concerns before and, certainly, others would have also expressed concerns about the notion that this process was somewhat flawed. It clearly was not. I believe too that it is a model that should be used in negotiations, not only at the level of our public servants, but at the level of representatives of the unions.

Mr. President, we also would have heard that the settlement, when looked at in the context of what Government can pay, what the workers are expecting or would need to maintain their standard of living in the face of all we have heard and have discussed, also suggest these were responsible negotiations and a responsible outcome.

I believe there was some concern expressed about the flip-side of the coin, so to speak. Salaries are about the one aspect of the right of workers, but with every right comes responsibilities. Therefore, I would want to say that while I agree with some expressions of concern about the level of productivity, or lack thereof, there were also expressions of appreciation of those hardworking public servants who, as we all know, are functioning within a structure, administrative and others. Sir, they are functioning within a system of rules and regulations, and within the physical conditions which would influence them either positively or negatively.

I am happy to say this Administration has placed on the front burner, so to speak, the need to address not only salaries but also to address the physical and other conditions under which our public servants, and to say that the Government of Barbados, as an employer, must become an exemplar of what is required of an employer.

Mr. President, all things considered, I believe that

none of us has had any difficulty in supporting the Resolution before us. Therefore, I would want to emphasise my support of this Resolution.

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 5 – RESOLUTION TO MOVE THE PASSING
OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE (TEACHERS) ORDER,
2008.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, recalling that we debated this Head as an omnibus discussion, I beg to move that this Resolution to approve the Public Service (Teachers) Order, 2008, do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 6 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PUBLIC
SERVICE (PART-TIME OFFICERS) ORDER,
2008.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Resolution to approve the Public Service (Part-time Officers) Order, 2008, do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SENATE
AND HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY (REMUNERATION AND
ALLOWANCES OF MEMBERS) ORDER, 2008.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Resolution to approve the Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 2008, do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

3.40 p.m.

ORDER 8

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE MINISTERS AND
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES
(REMUNERATION AND ALLOWANCES)
ORDER, 2008.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Resolution to approve the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 2008 do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 9 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE RATES
OF SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES APPLICABLE TO THE
POSTS OF PERSONAL ASSISTANT, EXECUTIVE
ASSISTANT, THE PRESS SECRETARY, EXECUTIVE
PERSONAL SECRETARY AND CLERICAL
ASSISTANT TO THE PRIME MINISTER AS SET
OUT IN THE SCHEDULE.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Resolution to approve the rates of salaries and allowances applicable to the posts of Personal Assistant, Executive Assistant, the Press Secretary, Executive Personal Secretary and Clerical Assistant to the Prime Minister as set out in the Schedule do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 10 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE RATES
OF SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES APPLICABLE TO
THE POSTS OF PERSONAL ASSISTANTS TO
MINISTERS AS SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: I beg to move that the Resolution to approve the rates of salaries and allowances applicable to the posts of Personal Assistants to Ministers as set out in the Schedule do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 11 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
PAYMENT OF AN INCREASED COST OF LIVING
ALLOWANCE TO GOVERNMENT
PENSIONERS.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Resolution to approve the payment of an increased cost of living allowance to Government pensioners do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 2 – PROFESSION, TRADE AND BUSINESS
REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2008.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move the second reading of the Profession, Trade and Business Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2008. Sir, in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals 2008, a decision was taken to review the existing fee structure under the Profession, Trade and Business Registration Act, Cap. 373. It was felt at that time that the fee structures that apply to various professional bodies or individual professions, those structures currently do not bear a proper relationship between the capacity of those professions.

There is an asymmetry between the earning capacity, as I have said, of some professions and the fees paid. Therefore, as good citizens, it is believed that those professions should pay fees commensurate with the kind of earning capacity and actual earnings that currently are involved.

Mr. President, in another place and at another time, I heard a number of comments which, to me, were ridiculous, to say the least, when people complained about the fee structure. Sir, let me illustrate. For example, in the First Schedule, we speak to professions such as accountants, actuaries, architects, attorneys-at-Law, dental practitioners, engineers, land surveyors and quantity surveyors and those persons are required to pay an annual fee of \$2 500. Sir, previously that fee stood at \$750.

Mr. President, I was amazed, when I listened to the debate in the Other Place to hear longstanding members of the legal profession suggest that they would have to pass on an increase of \$1 250 to their clients. Sir, this is a profession, which I am sure, perhaps, in one sitting, in some cases, multiples of this fee.

Mr. President, it would suggest to me that such notions either were intended to amuse or to make frivolous a serious matter, or to be mouthed by individuals who really do not have an appreciation for their need to contribute, in a small way, in this instance to the Treasury of this country.

Mr. President, let me repeat again, actuaries, architects, attorneys-at-Law, dental practitioners, engineers, land surveyors, quantity surveyors that if we look at their earnings - I would not send my colleague Senator, the Minister of State in Finance to look to see what is the highest level of declaration at the Inland Revenue, but I can tell you to pay this will make absolutely no dent in the pockets of those professionals. Sir, what they are, in fact, doing is paying to practise and to earn in multiples of this fee.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. President, in a similar vein, we have seen in the other categories of workers an increase. I will cite some of those increases, because I think it is important for us to understand those. In the case of a dental hygienist, we would have seen fees in relation to temporary registration of \$1 250, three months or less. I use these figures because we heard earlier in relation to another debate the issue of processing transactions.

In this case the transaction is a licence. I believe that not only should the cost of processing these transactions of the licence be recovered, we also have to recognise that a licence to a professional is not simply the charging of a fee

by Government because it can charge. I think that this fee recognises the importance of ensuring that these persons are qualified to perform their duties.

It is important that we are comfortable that an embalmer, for example, can do his or her job and I have chosen perhaps one in the same way, that I would want to ensure an architect is duly licenced, because he or she has demonstrated that they have qualified and meet the standards and remain qualified in order to perform their functions.

I believe that in light of that we really have to scratch way below the surface to find an argument against these increases. I believe, especially in the situation where these fees have not been increased for the last 20 years or so, if we look at the changes it is only reasonable that these kinds of fees be incurred.

In addition to talking about the fees, I want to take this opportunity to recommend to professionals that the payment of a fee is acknowledgment that you can practise your profession and you are up-to-date. I think that the renewal of a licence to practice suggests that there is competence that is sufficiently current to ensure the well-being of clients whether it is a dental practitioner, a paediatrician, an optometrist or a land surveyor. It is important that we impress upon our professionals that they are continuously learning.

I think that is one of the terms they use in management jargon, and that people pay special attention to this. I think that beyond speaking to the renewal of a licence, and the payment of a fee part of the renewal should probably speak to it of the demonstration by the professional that he or she maintains current knowledge of the particular profession. I believe that is something required of the professional body itself. I also believe that as protectors of the interest of the consumer that should very much be a requirement.

Sir, in those words, as I said, I can find no compelling objections to these fees. I do not believe that I have to overstate the case. As I said before, the fees are structured to demonstrate that individuals are required to bear their part of the burden of licensing and registering their profession allowing them to practice. It is a small one-time charge in order to practise their profession.

As I indicated, when we look at these fee structures, the individuals are not being asked to assume any significant financial burden and I would hasten to say that they are not at all required to assume any significant burden.

Sir, with those words, I ask that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F.L. CHANDLER: Mr. President I would like to make one of my usual short interventions on the proposed Amendments to the Profession, Trade and Business Registration (Amendment) Act. First of all I would like to clarify, I think Senator McClean said that it would be a one-time payment. As far as I understand, it is an annual payment.

Sir, using the example of architects, I know the fees have not been raised for a long time, but I think it seems a little bit illogical that during the construction boom the relatively low fee of \$500 was in force for architects. They have now been raised into a higher grouping, and the fee has gone up five times to \$2 500 at a time when we expect there to be a slow-down in construction except perhaps for Government projects which will probably be large and will only take care of the bigger architecture companies.

Also, until quite recently most architects were from overseas. We are now starting to get some local ones. I think we should be encouraging local people to go into that profession and raising the fees would certainly not encourage this.

Sir, I was wondering whether it would not be possible to put into place a system for all professionals, not only architects, where those who have just graduated would pay a lower fee, and that fee would gradually increase as they went on in time, because for a young graduate starting out I would think that \$2 500 is a fairly large fee in some of the professions.

As far as the groupings are concerned, I think we need to look at this more closely. For example, I would not think that a Land Surveyor whose only access to work is surveying land could be compared to a Lawyer whose scope of work is diverse from enormous transactions with international businesses, through divorces, conveyances, criminal Law and sometimes receiving very large fees for just changing names, in a document which is usually done by the legal system anyhow. I do not think that you can compare those two professions. I know Mr. President might not agree with me on that.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please, do not include the President in your debate. I have not spoken on the matter. I recognise rubbish when I hear it but I have not spoken on the matter.

SENATOR Dr. F.L. CHANDLER: Sir, I will also like to say that perhaps with the health issues that are upon us now and seemed to be increasing, maybe the medical practitioners should be put in a group all by themselves. I think their potential to earn seems very great and they do not seem to have many guidelines on the fees which they

can charge. I think that at least attorneys do have some guidelines as to fees but the medical profession does not seem to have any guidelines for charging their patients.

I thank you, Mr. President.

4.00 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Newton.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V.E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this Amendment to the Profession, Trade and Business Registration Act. In fact, I had long been advocating that this Act needed to be amended, although not necessarily the way it had been amended. That was one of the ways but I had often said that this was a piece of legislation which needed to be revisited all together because many categories of professions are not included.

Sir, at one time when I spoke to someone in the Attorney General's Department, I was told that it was their intention to revisit the Act all together. I was also told it was difficult to formulate an Act that captured everyone. Nothing had happened until now. While it is clear that this was one of the pieces of legislation on the Statute Books that has provision for fees to be paid, and those fees were woefully inadequate, I have a few concerns with the general content of the Act.

Now, everyone, except an attorney, will say that it is just as good that attorneys are being made to pay \$2 500 a year as a registration fee, instead of continuing the old provision which was that Lawyers of a certain number of years of call, say one to five years, paid less than those 10 years or over. In other words, the Act, without the Amendment, had a grading scheme which many thought worked very well, except, of course, if you are a government trying to collect taxes, the ceiling was low. I have no real problem with the raising of the ceiling.

Sir, to some extent, I support Senator Chandler's point that the provision for a young attorney, just starting out, some of them barely make enough to provide for the clothes that they have to wear and to get to work, \$2 500 might be a lot of money. Sir, again, one cannot be too hard and fast in relation to that point, because some young attorneys do have good breaks and in a short time, they are able to earn. Therefore, I can see it would be difficult to decide exactly where and when the breaks would occur in making provisions for increases. Mr. President, my real problem with this particular Amendment comes in the Second Schedule.

Mr. President, before I move to the second Schedule, let me stay with the First Schedule, in relation to doctors. It is within my knowledge that many doctors who qualify

outside of the Caribbean, in Cuba and elsewhere, when they come to Barbados, in spite of the certificates they have and the fact that there are equivalency standards that these certificates could be tested against, have it that they have to take exams all over again and it has caused a lot of hardship.

I was wishing that this was one of the amendments that the Act would look at, but at the same time, I am aware that there is a new Medical Profession Act in draft, which I believe is going to address those matters. My information is that the Bill is being looked over, in relation to EPA provisions, to make sure that there are no violations, and persons qualifying as doctors elsewhere moving to Barbados, would be within the provisions of the EPA and other agreements.

Mr. President, the Second Schedule deals mainly with professions and businesses, which might be considered to be ones that yield smaller remunerations than those in Part I. It includes builders, pharmacists, dental technicians, auctioneers, and real estate agents.

Sir, the same point could be made in relation to real estate agents as one would seek to make in relation to doctors and attorneys that there are real estate agents; and there are real estate agents. The small fellow might sell two or three pieces of land a year, and his income is not substantial. Then, there are others who work in big firms like the TERRAS, REALTORS and so on which, in fact, corner most of the market and are in the million-dollar range, and they are paying the same registration fee as the small fellow. Again, I am not going to be too hard and fast on that.

Mr. President, my problem with just having real estate agents included as one category is that in fact, the real estate agency business comprises real estate agents, property managers and valuers. They are all involved in the business of selling and negotiating land and contracts to do with land. In fact, many of them practise in the three different categories. There is overlap but many of them are different.

Sir, there is a Valuers Association in Barbados for a long time, and now there is the Barbados Estate Agents of Valuers Association, and they have been lobbying, so they say, to have valuers included as a separate category under this legislation. To date, that has not been done. Some of them in the industry, and especially the Barbados Estate Agents of Valuers Association, have been calling for legislation to regulate the real estate industry.

In my view, it is long overdue. Sir, if that happens, the real estate category will be taken from this Act, because then they would have their own piece of legislation. I

would say that the call of legislation to regulate the real estate industry is long overdue, for many reasons.

It is a billion-dollar industry. A lot of the buyers of Barbadian real estate are persons from overseas, especially those who are buying on the West Coast. To my very certain knowledge, not so long ago, a property on the West Coast was sold for US\$22 million by a local agent. The person who bought the land has not seen it yet, which means that there is scope for money laundering in this industry.

The Government should take note because lots of other countries, especially in situations such as ours, where land is at a premium and where foreigners are interested because of the ambience - Barbadians are friendly people and so on - would like to buy land here and it offers a good opportunity in a place where the industry is totally unregulated to launder money for ill-gotten gains.

The legislation that should be enacted, in my view, is one which recognises the various categories in the industry, provides a Board, in the same way as the Architects Act, the proposed Medical Registration Bill and the Nurses Act legislation has provided Boards to regulate the industry. I would recommend that a member of the public be on the Board. It should not just be persons involved in the industry who have an interest, but members of John Public.

Sir, in the public's eye, people think that the high land prices have to do with the way the industry is structured and the way real estate agents operate. This may not be so, but certainly, I would think that if a Board was established under legislation, you should have a representative of the general public on the Board, who will bring the concerns of the ordinary man to the attention of the Board. The Board should prescribe and have oversight provisions for educational qualifications and for fees appropriate to qualifications and experience.

I speak of educational qualifications because I do not know how many people know it that anyone of us could get up tomorrow and say we are going to be a real estate agent, go down to the High Court, pay the money - it is now \$750 - and get into our car and start selling land.

4.10 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: A few years ago, the Barbados Estate Agents and Valuers Association in collaboration with the Barbados Community College started doing a course for real estate agents, not for valuers, but it is not compulsory because not all persons who sell real estate belong to the Association and there is no legislation.

Mr. President, if there is no legislation and you do not want to pay to go to the Barbados Community College, and you are not already working in the industry to get your experience, you just get a car or some means of transport, you ask somebody to sell their land and you put up the sign. Furthermore, in an industry as unregulated as this one, a lot of people with no qualifications and no experience are acting as valuers.

A person showed me a piece of land and said this is worth such and such. I left that person and I got almost twice as much for it. This leads us to another problem in the real estate industry. Many of the agents, some of them well-known and some of them with the longest list of properties in the newspaper up for sale - flip properties - would come to you or me who want to sell a piece of land urgently and if I say I want \$100 000 for it, they will pay me, pretending not to act on behalf of themselves, get somebody to buy it for that money, and within a couple of weeks it is sold for twice as much.

I would think that in legislation there should be a provision for, like a three-month moratorium, or something like that after a piece of land is bought by an agent before it is sold again. That might discourage that kind of behaviour.

Mr. President, you could imagine the consternation of someone who sells land for a small amount of money only to then see it in the papers the next week or two being advertised for three times as much, or sometimes more, because that person did not know the true value of the land and trusted someone who told them that it was something else?

Mr. President, another thing which such legislation should include is a Code of Ethics for persons involved in the real estate industry, which would have to do with the advertising of land, and how they relate to each other and so on. Sir, in the unregulated conditions we have now, there is a lot of scope for people - although there are written practices, there are some who would not abide by them - to try to sell land that other agents are advertising and so on.

The other point in relation to real estate is that it would be useful to have professional indemnity insurance, at least for valuers, because some cases do end up in Court where some inexperienced valuers provide the banks with one valuation and then things go wrong and the client might suffer as a result of that valuation. Some banks are now asking that valuers take out professional indemnity insurance, but again there is nothing to force them to do so.

Recently, the Fair Trading Commission and representatives of the banking industry met to consider qualifications and other provisions for valuers who are doing business with the banks. One of the objectives was to

ensure that the banks do not deal only with a few valuers but that they give all those who are qualified an opportunity to do work for the banks and to make a living. This is a good move but, in my view, it should be something included in legislation to take the discretionary element out of it.

The Barbados Estate Agents and Valuers Association are very concerned with the state of the industry but they represent only some of the real estate agents. Therefore, while we are busy trying to provide regulation to regulate the industry, they are others who have no association with them at all, and are continuing to do their own thing. Therefore, I would think that this is an area that Government should give some serious attention to.

Already The Bahamas and Jamaica have legislation on the Statute Book, Jamaica from as far back as 1983. Trinidad and Tobago has been for some time considering legislation, but I was informed that they are waiting on the real estate industry to provide proposals, and apparently they have come up with some proposals, but the draft Bill has not yet reached the Government.

Barbados is regarded in the Caribbean as an initiator of good governance measures. I would think that we would want to be among those that are seeking to regulate the real estate industry, especially since it impacts so much on the economy and our lives.

Mr. President, in relation to the Amendment, I take note that in Part II of the Second Schedule freelance journalists are included in the list of professions for which \$750 per year is to be paid. Again, I have no problem with the amount. Journalists perform a very important function in any democratic country. They inform, they provide entertainment and they educate citizens on sensitive everyday issues.

Mr. President, it is in relation to the role of journalists that I was extremely disturbed last Thursday morning when I was at the Airport. While there I saw a copy of one of our two newspapers in which some very unfortunate comments were made in relation to one of the Caribbean's leading journalists who was just doing what, as far as I am concerned, journalists are supposed to do and which we, as citizens, should try to seek information. If my understanding of the article was correct, that journalist was asking for information in relation to statements made by the Government of Barbados in relation to the number of immigrants from other Caribbean countries who are in Barbados and the burden that those immigrants are placing on our social services.

Mr. President, if my understanding is correct - and I was away for weeks, I do not know what happened in

between - that journalist was merely asking, as I read it - that if the Government had information to back up its assertions they should be made public. I endorse that wholeheartedly because in another place I was asked about these statements and I was asked, has a study been done? Mr. President, we must not forget that a previous Administration said that there was no problem with these immigrants being in Barbados, the only thing was in relation to housing its CARICOM neighbours. Mr. President, here it is that a new Administration comes along and is saying it is not housing only, it is schools and hospitals. All of this may be well, but we should not make these assertions unless we have done studies that prove them.

Mr. President, we live in sensitive times. I am in favour of managed migration, but sometimes we have to remember that Barbadians, without being called by anyone were moving up and down the world since slavery ended. A lot of Guyanese have roots in Barbados. Their grandfathers or grandmothers came from Barbados.

It is the same with Vincentians and St. Lucians. According to the information which I did involving migration studies, there are more St. Lucians here than Guyanese. I have no brief for anyone. It used to be okay, but Guyanese are moving throughout the Caribbean.

Mr. President, while we have to maintain what we consider certain standards, we have to remember that these things are cyclical. Before the Federation came into being, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, with Sir Eric Williams, feared that a lot of immigrants from St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Barbados would move into Trinidad and Tobago.

4.20 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: He did not do anything to stem what he thought was a tide but in the economic migration what he said was that it is something that ought to be looked at carefully before the Federation came into being, and that industries and packages of other things ought to be done to make sure that people would not flock into Trinidad and Tobago in large numbers. But he did not try to put any measures in place to deal with the freedom of movement before the Federation came into being. In fact, the freedom of movement was one of the pillars on which the Federation was proposed and came into being. It was also one of the ones on which it was founded, so thereby hangs the tale.

Mr. President, I am making the point that the Barbados Government was all in favour of freedom of movement. This Government supported the freedom of movement more than any other Government. Sir, the time will come again - because these things move in circles -

when we will find our people going elsewhere to find employment and so we cannot be too harsh. Of course, we have to look after our own but in doing so, we have to look at our own very seriously. Sir, a lot of our own do not want to work in agriculture nor construction. A lot of our own want wages which they have not earned.

Sir, I had someone working for me. That person worked for 12 hours painting, and at the end of the 12 hours, he charged me \$750. Sir, some of the Guyanese are doing it too, I gather, now that they have come and settled and know how things are operating, but the point is that this is a reality that we have to face.

Mr. President, I am not being critical of any Government, I am speaking primarily as a person who has studied migration, as that is my area of speciality. I know these things come in circles. I know also that you have to be very sensitive about the way in which they are addressed.

Mr. President, recently there was a study done by a company out of Jamaica, in which they looked to see what are the effects of the Caribbean Community and (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy might be in relation to the freedom of movement. What the study showed was that a lot of people, even poor people - because often it is not the poorest of persons who migrate - People love their country, sometimes things are hard but many of them are willing to stick it out - admire Barbados. They said it was a well-developed country, that the educational system is good, that there was a good health care system, et cetera, but that its people are xenophobic and are becoming more and more unfriendly.

This may or may not be a report on how we are as people. We may not care. By the same token, we may not be interested in the Caribbean Community and (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy but what I would warn is that these things come in cycles. Sir, we do not know today. We might be considered that we are in a good position, that we have a good economy, et cetera, and therefore some of us could afford to make derogatory remarks about others and so on, but we have to be very careful how these things would pan out, especially in the uncertainties of the global environment. Sir, 10 years from now Bajans might be going to Guyana because the country has a lot of potential, and if Guyana could get the capital to develop, who knows what would happen.

Mr. President, I would think that persons involved in journalism should be more charitable to others who are in the same arena, having knowledge of what their profession is supposed to be doing. Some journalists get carried away in their effort to show how supportive or how dismissive they are of a particular Government, but crucial to journalism are the things they should not forget, that is, to

try to be fair in their reporting and that the function of journalism is to provide information and to enlighten the public. Therefore, to try to wake up xenophobia on the part of Barbadians, who might not be necessarily thinking as far ahead as some others, I think is reprehensible.

Mr. President, having said that in relation to the Profession Trade and Business Registration Act, I support the passing of this Bill. I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, before I wrap up, I feel it is absolutely necessary that, as the individual Minister with responsibility for the past 10 months for Immigration, to respond to the last comments of the previous speaker.

Mr. President, I was not here on that day, neither am I sure about the article, but first of all, whenever I hear the word "xenophobia" used in relation to Barbados, I become very upset. Sir, having lived in this country for more than five decades, I have seen this country received all kinds of persons. Therefore, for persons to use labels which are jazzy, which are intended to stir up a whole set of emotions, as they are doing to me presently, do not do justice to a very serious issue with which this country is facing.

Mr. President, in another place when I functioned as a talk show host, where I fielded questions and engaged in discussions, I was speaking as an observer from the outside, but I have come to sit in a place where I have seen the issue close-up. Sir, it is unfortunate that the previous Administration was not up-front with the people of this country, nor with the citizens of Guyana and other CARICOM countries.

We on This Side do not have a difficulty with welcoming our Caribbean brothers and sisters to this country but Barbados, being 166 square miles, has to do so in a way where we focus on capacity.

Mr. President, my colleague on the Other Side mentioned the need for information and I can say categorically that my first remit to the Immigration Department was that I cannot function without information. Sir, for those last 10 months we went about trying to bring order to disorder.

Mr. President, questions were asked in this country, time and time again, about the numbers of persons who are in this country. Sir, I can say, in a very simple arithmetic way, if the previous Administration decision-makers wanted to ask the question, two simple statistics could have been used over a period of 14 years, to give us a rough estimate of the numbers of individuals from any country

who came into Barbados. Sir, those two simple statistics are "arrivals" and "departures". You could take arrivals and subtract departures and you may get either a positive or a negative number.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, on a point of order. Mr. President, my information is that the statistics on arrivals and departure are incomplete and in some cases, the entry of that information into database or wherever was not done. I was told that as recently as a few days ago, when I was seeking to make comparisons of statistics with other countries. Mr. President, I thank you.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I did not come here to debate those matters. In fact, I am reluctant to speak of the Immigration Department because it is now somebody else's portfolio, but I can speak of the last 10 months because I was responsible and would have set in train and handed over to my colleague a number of things that are in train.

Mr. President, I would have received statistics and if I were allowed to develop the point, I would have made the point that in taking the numbers, I would have had the number of arrivals for some periods. Sir, certainly those numbers might have been in disorder, but order can be brought to disorder, and fairly quickly.

Mr. President, there is a form we all fill out whenever we travel. Those forms are not thrown away the next day, next month or the next year. Therefore, if we want and if we have the will to do things, things will be done. If we set standards, things will be done.

4.30 p.m.

Mr. President, if I may continue on that. If you take arrivals and you subtract departures, you may have a positive number which means that more persons arrived than departed or you may have a smaller number, but when you aggregate those things over a time-frame, it can give you some idea of a net figure, positive or negative, and you would get a sense of the number of persons who would be in this country.

Mr. President, in addition that is one of the basic statistics we could start to work with. In addition, I made it my business and I requested a meeting with senior officer in the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Immigration, and several other key agencies providing services to Barbadian and non-Barbadians.

Sir, statistics have been generated by the Ministry of Education, which suggest that secondary schools, for the most part, if not all of them, now have enrolments beyond the numbers that they were asked to and in those numbers

can be disaggregated the number of non-nationals in the schools and that could be further disaggregated to show Regional, international and then break the Regional down probably by nationality.

Mr. President, the point I am making is that to suggest, having added it as a tangent to the discussion on professional fees that, perhaps, this Administration by its actions, direct or indirect, is stirring up a sentiment of xenophobia is, perhaps, a very unfortunate inference.

SENATOR The Hon. Mrs. V.E. NEWTON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of explanation, or order. I was the person being referred to and I never said what was being attributed to me, Sir.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: I mentioned an inference. I did not say that anybody said, Mr. President. Sir, the point I am making before I get back to the substance of the debate is that information is being compiled. It is being compiled after a decade and a half of neglect for the need for information. The Immigration Department right now is being prepared to have in place a state-of-the-art information management system, which would allow, from the Prime Minister, who is ultimately responsible, down to the immigration officers, who are assigned the responsibility to do some comprehensive analyses and generate up-to-date information. I believe that unless we accept that, we are fooling ourselves.

Mr. President, I want to reiterate that this Government and these people of whom I am one have not, in my years on this earth, and I am not afraid to say how many years, 52...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Really, you look like 22.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Sir, in all those years, I have not seen evidence that Barbadians have been hostile, unfriendly or unacceptable. The reality, however, is that if you go around Barbados and look, there are sites that could be stated where people are squatting in Barbados. The research is being undertaken and it has been established that those persons are, for the vast majority, non- Barbadians. Yes, things may be hard in other countries and we live in cycles, but almost some black Barbadian has some connection to a Guyanese and we know that.

I would use the words that were used before and I will repeat it: "Ever so welcome, wait for a call". We have to recognise that if you cannot be fully hospitable because we cannot offer housing, you cannot offer proper medical care, we are not only doing damage to those persons, but we are doing damage to ourselves.

Mr. President, we have to do things in a measured way. Sir, that is what managed migration is about. It is not about a resistance to accepting our brothers and sisters. Sir, I cannot walk into my brother's house and say I am going to take up residence because he is my brother. We have to recognise that if he cannot help me, I will have to find somewhere else to go. Sir, that is the basic reality.

Mr. President, I have heard it too long. Sir, people are suggesting that Barbadians are unfriendly, inhospitable and xenophobic. Sir, somebody learned a big word but I think that they should stay with the "is" or "are" as was suggested by my fellow Senator. Sir, people learn these words and these are words that stir up emotion.

Mr. President, the reality is that we have to recognise that there is something called "carrying capacity", whether it is in the business of tourists arriving on a cruise ship, or an aeroplane, people making demand on our electricity system, our drinking water supply or even the people who can sit in this room.

Sir, when I was a student in Ohio and Louisiana and I wanted to go to a bar and have a drink, there was a sign which said the capacity of this is "X" and if the proprietor went over that number, he was fined by the authorities because there is this notion of capacity.

Mr. President, we have to deal with that. If we do not deal with it, we are going to hurt ourselves and hurt everybody else. Sir, I think it is unfortunate that we get these kinds of comments. I understand the Honourable Senator said that her area is migration. Therefore, I think that, if nobody else, the Honourable Senator should understand the kinds of issues that a Government would have to grapple with, as it seeks...

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V.E. NEWTON: Mr. President, on a point of elucidation. I was speaking about an article that I saw in the newspaper. I was not criticising the Government. The two might be one and the same in some people's eyes but that was not the intention.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: I will move away from this. I just want to reiterate for those Members of this Honourable Chamber, for Barbadians, Guyanese, St. Lucians, Dominicans to persons from Eastern Europe and everybody, who have found this little rock a beautiful place to be that we welcome them but we have to welcome them under conditions which would ensure that the very things they love about this precious rock remain the thing that we can enjoy and that my sons, grandsons and granddaughters, if I should have any, would also come to enjoy and future generations. I think that is important.

Mr. President, if I may wrap up on the matter of Profession, Trade and Business Registration Act, Cap 33, the amendments to that, Sir. I want to indicate that in response to some of the comments made, where there was a suggestion that new professionals earn less and, therefore, should perhaps pay less, one of the things I would want to say is that professionals have to start their career somewhere, but they come to that profession with a set of skills, which are supposed to be certified and certifiable as well, and which are recognised through registration. It is expected, therefore, as with anybody who starts a business that a small business incurs significant cost to start up, but as that business grows, those costs are recouped in several ways and we could use that analogy in respect of fees.

Mr. President, I know there was a concern about the category of professionals in Schedule 1, where they are not seen to be of equal earning capacity. I also would want to say that in some professions you will find very few persons. If we look at quantity surveyors, the number of persons in that profession in the country are probably substantially less than in the legal profession.

Sir, as we look at these things, we want to recognise that the persons who are members of a particular profession are, in fact, through the payment of these fees, investing in their profession. The cost of annual registration fee, as I have said before, truly functions as a burden.

4.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I want to touch on some recommendations to indicate that I know that the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, has been particularly concerned about this and has recommended that there be a comprehensive review of the Act to go beyond the issue of fees. Of course, part of that is to recognise the need to identify the setting of standards.

The question of professional indemnity, which was raised, is a matter which addressed the Ministry and, certainly, in time we will see a comprehensive overview of this recognising the rapid expansion of professions, the need for persons to compete in their profession and, most importantly, the need to protect the consumer or client.

I, therefore, believe that with those words I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

COMMITTEE

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. M.P.O. McCLEAN, Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate went into Committee on the Bill, Her Honour SENATOR Miss K.F. IFILL in the Chair.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 8, inclusive, were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT, reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time, passed, and cited as the Profession, Trade and Business Registration (Amendment) Act, 2008.

ORDER NO. 1 – THE BARBADOS INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS PROMOTION CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2008

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Mcclean.

SENATOR the Hon Miss. M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to move the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2008. Sir, this Amendment is intended to change the definition of Minister in the Bill to mean the Minister to whom the responsibility for the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation has been assigned.

Secondly, to be amended to insert a definition for international business, meaning specifically international manufacturing, trade and commerce.

Thirdly, to include an amendment to increase the number of Directors by one additional person, to include the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry responsible for Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation, Sir, parallel to that, including an amendment to increase the quorum of the Board by one person.

Sir, the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation that has come to be known as Invest Barbados, was an entity established under the previous Administration assumed some of the responsibilities previously held by the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation. As the name suggests, its focus was on international business promotion and was intended to facilitate a very important sector of our economic activity.

4.50 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Substantial funds were allocated under the previous Administration. Certainly, in January, on assumption of

office, as we assumed the process of developing and refining the Estimates, a serious re-look had to be made of the funds allocated under the Estimates to this entity. In order to streamline its operations, further scrutiny of the existing strategic plans, et cetera, suggested several factors which needed to be considered.

Foremost in the minds of this Administration and the Ministry of Finance was the need to ensure that where there has been a proliferation of entities outside of the main Public Service and beyond the traditionally existing Statutory Corporations, there needed to be clear evidence and structures put in place to ensure that there is proper accountability for those resources.

I would speak first to the need to increase the number of Directors to include the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry responsible for this Corporation. Mr. President, as we are aware, the Permanent Secretary is the Ministry's accounting officer and he or she therefore has the responsibility for accounting for financing and the oversight of finances within the Ministry, or to entities assigned to that particular Ministry, or operating under the general jurisdiction - for want of a better word - of that Ministry.

Therefore, this Administration and the Minister of Finance were particularly concerned that there is proper oversight of these entities. One clear and obvious mechanism for that oversight would be the placement of the permanent secretary, or his or her representative in some circumstances, on the Board of these entities.

It is felt that the Permanent Secretary, as the officer who interfaces with the Minister and who, as I said before, has overall responsibility for any agency utilising funds from the public purse, should be in a position to understand, participate in, and be aware of, and therefore maintain a necessary link between the agency and the Minister that the Permanent Secretary is in a position to do that.

Therefore, the increase of the Board by one member is not done on the whim of fancy of this Administration, or the Minister. It is done as a mechanism, creating a structure that would ensure, as I said, proper oversight.

This Administration has made a commitment and has made some very tangible strides towards enhancing the general accountability, transparency and overall integrity of the management of our finances, and the overall management of the public sector. Therefore, that is essentially the justification for that expansion. Of course, a quorum would be increased by one to recognise the increase in the Board. Mr. President, I believe that these Amendments, though straightforward, are of significant importance. I spoke first of the size of the Board.

Mr. President, I will speak secondly to the question of the definition. Sir, coming from a teaching background, I believe that working definitions also set very clear parameters as to the scope and purpose of whether it is an essay that you are writing on a topic or the scope and purpose of an institution in which you seek to manage and make decisions. Therefore, in speaking of international manufacturing, international trade and commerce this definition also sets out in a legal sense, the broad parameters within which this organisation will operate.

Mr. President, I want to say that on assumption of responsibility as a Minister within the Prime Minister's Office, and a perusal of some of the original documentation in respect of this agency, I had several concerns as a person probably trained in management and who spent many of my year not only talking management, but also functioning at the level of Board Members, et cetera, in entities across this country.

I think that when we look at what obtained in terms of our organisational structure for Invest Barbados, as I use the short name, or the name it is commonly known by, we had some serious concerns about the proposed operations, as set out.

Sir, at the time of assuming office, we were hard-pressed to find concrete evidence that this entity, notwithstanding the substantial Budget that it had at its disposal, had been able to deliver in any substantial way. I am happy to say that, based on those concerns, significant effort has gone into reviewing this organisation to achieve a number of things.

Mr. President, one is to achieve a focus on outcomes. One in which, at the end of each reporting period, as determined by the Board, et cetera, they are in a position to say to the Government and to Cabinet specifically, these are the things that we are able to achieve.

Sir, I believe, like many people that form does not represent substance. Form is nice to look at and it sounds good, but unless that form is able to deliver something substantial, then we would have done nothing.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, at the end of the day, we need to ensure that we can see some concrete deliverables. The form and structure of the organisation have also been addressed. Efforts have been made to ensure that a number of managers - This seems to be a very top heavy organisation, where people were being paid handsomely and, in fact, when you looked at the persons who were supposed to be on the ground delivering, there was less, in terms of the foot soldiers and more in terms of the ... - I think we usually say, the ... - There was a

term that just eluded me. The point is that the organisation was rather top heavy, in terms of personnel. Clearly, efforts have been made to flatten the organisational structure. For example, at least two of the directors would not be replaced, and we would have divisions run by managers.

I believe that as a relatively new organisation, it also needs to have, in the short-term, a very clear and focussed approach to doing business. It is important that we explore as many international business opportunities as possible but, at the same time, if we too widely dispose our effort, we may find ourselves too diffused to achieve any concrete results.

Sir, I believe that these adjustments are very critical to working towards making this organisation one that is focussed on results, one that is accountable to the Central Government authority, and one in which we can see, at the end of the day, some significant return on our money. It is part of an attempt to streamline Government's efforts to build its economic engine, so to speak, to build those areas of the economy which generate earnings, and the use of resources.

Mr. President, I know that there was, in another place a discussion about the reduction of the 2008-2009 Budget from \$21 million to \$13 million.

5.00 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: What I can say to you is that in doing that, the Administration will demonstrate that our intention is not to just throw money at things, but to ensure that as good stewards of the public purse, we are at all times making sure that we make the best use of our resources. Mr. President, where funds are tightly controlled, I am sure, that we are going to see the kinds of results that we would anticipate notwithstanding a reduction in the Budget.

In reducing that Budget, we have also, as I said, cut some significant fat from the wages and salaries bill and we have added some clear focus to the promotional strategies to be used by the company. In doing so, I anticipate that this entity will serve to make a positive contribution to employment generation and to foreign exchange earnings and, at the end of the day, justify its existence with the modifications that this Administration has seen fit to put in place.

Therefore, Sir, at this point in time, I pause to recommend those Amendments to you and therefore move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I seemed to have been very lucid in my contribution. Of course, as we are aware, we are missing the Opposition and so, perhaps, that may explain...

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Senate resolved itself into Committee, Her Honour SENATOR Miss K. F. IFILL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4, inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, Madam CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Barbados International Business Promotion (Amendment) Act, 2008.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn until Wednesday, December 17, 2008 at 11:00 o'clock in the morning.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn until Wednesday, December 17, 2008 at 11.00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.

5.10 p.m.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. Obituary Speeches. The opening tribute to the late Mr. George Alleyne follows the heading without any speaker's name; from the next speech it appears to be Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean's. Printed as in the source.

Q2. Order No. 4, omnibus debate. Senators Marville, Walters and Benn are each recorded as rising 'to support the ombudsman Resolution', apparently for the 'omnibus' Resolution moved by the Leader; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard credits 'the Government and the credit union' with the settlement. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Papers, item 1, and PRESENT list. Item 1 is listed as the 'Public Officers (General) Order, 2008', while the Resolution concerns the Public Service (General) Order, 2008; the PRESENT list gives the Leader of the Senate as 'Miss M. O. P. McCLEAN'. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Orders Nos. 5 and 8. Order No. 5 is headed 'RESOLUTION TO MOVE THE PASSING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE (TEACHERS) ORDER, 2008', and Order No. 8 is headed only 'ORDER 8'. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 2, Senator Mrs. V. E. Newton. On one point of explanation Senator Newton is recorded as addressing 'Mr. Speaker'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 1, third reading. The Bill is cited on third reading as the 'Barbados International Business Promotion (Amendment) Act, 2008', omitting the word 'Corporation' used in its heading. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met at 11.15 a.m. on Wednesday, 10th December, 2008, with the President, Senator Dr. B. M. Taitt, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah, and the President announced that Senator K. D. Symmonds was out of the country on business. The Leader of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, laid eleven papers, chiefly the public service, judicial and parliamentary salary Orders for 2008 and the Annual Report of the Fair Trading Commission for

the year ending 31st March, 2008. Standing Order 22(1) was suspended, the Transport Board (Amendment) Bill, 2008 was read a first time and notice was given of eight salary Resolutions.

Senators paid tribute to the late Mr. George Alleyne, father of Senator D. McD. Alleyne, who thanked them, and congratulated Senator the Rev. P. A. V. Millington on his marriage; the President joined in both and urged Officers of Parliament to follow the Senator's example.

Senator McClean then moved the Resolution to approve the Public Service (General) Order, 2008, with Orders Nos. 4 to 11 taken as an omnibus debate. She set the salary increases against the uncertain international economic climate and the Government's ability to pay, and described the settlement as prudent, fair and higher than many in the past. Senator the Hon. A. B. Walters, Minister of State, said the settlement was 6 per cent in the first year and 4.5 per cent in the second, that CTUSAB had accepted those figures for senior civil servants, and compared earlier settlements, such as 5.75 per cent in 2001 to 2003 against 12 per cent sought. Senators R. O. Marville, Dr. F. L. Chandler, the Hon. H. LaV. Benn, the Rev. P. A. V. Millington, Miss P. I. Inniss, Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner and D. K. A. Griffith, who asked about Trinidad's practice of hiring contract officers, supported the Resolutions. Senator J. A. C. Hutson supported them with mixed feelings, fearing that the increase would guide private business and lead to lay-offs in sectors such as agriculture that could not pass on costs; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard supported the 10.5 per cent settlement but said conditions were now more severe than when it was negotiated.

Senator D. McD. Alleyne rejected the suggestion that the National Union of Public Workers had negotiated in bad faith, noting that the 2006 to 2008 settlement had taken three meetings, and argued for transformational leadership in the public sector; he made a document a paper of the Senate. Senator McClean replied that the integrity of the negotiating process was intact. The Resolution was agreed to, and the Resolutions under Orders Nos. 5 to 11, covering teachers, part-time officers, the remuneration of Members, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, the Prime Minister's and Ministers' personal staff, and a cost of living allowance for Government pensioners, were each moved by Senator McClean and agreed to.

Senator McClean moved the second reading of the Profession, Trade and Business Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2008, which revises the fee structure as announced in the 2008 Budgetary Proposals, dismissing complaints in the other place that lawyers would have to pass on an

increase of \$1 250. Senator Dr. Chandler spoke of young professionals and medical practitioners. Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. Newton supported a revision of the Act but noted that \$2 500 a year might be a lot for a young attorney, and spoke at length on migration and freedom of movement within CARICOM. Senator McClean, who had been responsible for Immigration for the past 10 months, replied on immigration statistics, drawing points of order and elucidation from Senator Newton. The Bill passed through Committee, with the Deputy President, Senator Miss K. F. Ifill, in the Chair.

Finally Senator McClean moved the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2008, which redefines 'Minister', defines international business and adds the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of the body known as Invest Barbados, explaining that its budget and wages bill had been cut and its promotional focus sharpened. She remarked that the Opposition was absent. Clauses 1 to 4 were passed in Committee and the Bill was read a third time. The Senate was adjourned until Wednesday, 17th December, 2008 at 11.00 a.m.