
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1960

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 23rd August, 1960

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12 o'clock noon today.

PRESENT

His Honour Mr. K. N. R. HUSBANDS, (*Speaker*); Mr. J. E. T. BRANCKER, (*Leader of the Opposition*); Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, C.B.E., M.D., C.M., (*Premier*); Hon. M. E. COX, (*Minister of Trade, Industry and Labour*); His Honour Mr. L. E. SMITH, J.P., (*Deputy Speaker*); Hon. R. G. MAPP, (*Minister of Communications, Works and Housing*); Mr. F. C. GODDARD; Hon. F. E. MILLER, (*Minister of Social Services*); Hon. D. D. GARNER, (*Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries*); Mr. C. B. SEARLES; Hon. L. St.A. THORNE, (*Minister of Education*); and Mr. E. W. BARROW, B.Sc. .

Prayers were read.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that the Minutes of the meetings held on the 16th and 18th August, 1960, respectively, have been printed and circulated amongst hon. members and that unless any objection be taken, these Minutes will now be taken as read and confirmed.

(A Pause).

There being no objection, these Minutes are now taken as read and confirmed.

DOCUMENT

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received the Financial Report of the Accountant General of the Island for the month ended 31st March, 1960.

Mr. WALCOTT, Mr. DOWDING and Mr. BRYAN entered the House and took their seats.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:-

"The Barbados Statistical Service - Selected Monthly Indicators-June 1960."

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Government Notices were given as follows:-

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Resolution to place the sum of \$6,457 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive

Committee to supplement the Estimates 1960-61. Part I - Current as shown in the Supplementary Estimate 1960-61. No. 14 which forms the schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. M. E. COX: Resolution to sanction the Regulations entitled the "Exportation (Drawback of Duties on Locally Manufactured Woodwork) Regulations, 1960."

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: A Bill to make provision for the levying of a tax on certain motor vehicles.

Hon. M. E. COX: A Bill to amend the Public Utilities Act, 1951.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of my intention to move the House into Committee of Supply at its next meeting to consider the Money Resolution, of which notice has just been given.

Mr. CORBIN entered the House and took his seat.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

On motion of Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, seconded by Hon. M. E. COX, the Bill to make provision for the levying of a tax on certain motor vehicles, was read a first time.

On motion of Hon. M. E. COX, seconded by Hon. D. D. GARNER, the Bill to amend the Public Utilities Act, 1951, was read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL, 1960

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order of the Day stands in the name of the Hon. Premier: Second reading of a Bill to amend the Local Government Act, 1958. 12.25 p.m.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill to amend the Local Government Act, 1958. As is set out in the "Objects and Reasons", and as the law stands at present, while provision is made for the Government to make grants and subsidies to the Local Government Councils, the Act does not make the position sufficiently flexible so that the Government may be able to give to certain services the assistance which it is intended to give. This Bill seeks to amend that provision. Government will be able to give assistance to certain classes of hereditaments and, in cases of trade tax, to certain categories of these taxpayers. We had the experience last year, which is quite fresh in the memories of hon. members, where the Government gave subsidies to the Northern and Southern Councils; and because we had to carry out the law as it stands now, that subsidy to each Council applied to all categories of payers of trade tax and owners of hereditaments in the areas. We had the spectacle of subsidising people who were in a position to take care of themselves and to pay their own taxes.

The object of this Bill is therefore to correct that situation, so that if and when the Government decides to give a subsidy or a grant to a Council, the Government will be in a position to say the classes and the categories of people whom it intends to help. There is nothing which will affect the rate; the rate as levied will remain as it is; but the Government will be in a position to relieve categories of taxpayers, 20%, 40%, 50% or 80% as the case may be.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is anything more which I can add to what I have already said; the experience of last year is still fresh in the minds of all of us, an experience which resulted in a decision which we did not intend. We could not do anything in the matter then, because, as the law stands at present, we did not have the right to vary the decision. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker, the Government is certainly more muddled with this Local Government Act now than it has ever been; they seem to know very little of what they are doing. We are now reaching the stage where the Government is attempting to administer Local Government in Governor-in-Executive Committee, and it seems to me as if the Government is unaware as to how local rates are determined. In the Government today there are members who were Vestrymen; certainly, they could enlighten others as to what they are leading the Government into doing. If the Government realises that because of the change from the Vestry system to the new Local Government system, the rates are bearing heavily on certain classes of the people, let them amend the Act at its source and have the exemptions made for all of a certain class.

When the Local Government Bill was being introduced, it was this side of the House which advised that the exemptions on certain hereditaments should be raised to a higher level so as to exclude that very small category of persons who are unable to meet their taxes and avoid the Vestries or Local Government from issuing tax bills in the first instance; also, to avoid as much as possible having to render tax relief as is done today. For them to come and grant a subsidy for the specific purpose of giving relief to a certain category of persons, how is that to be done?

When the Minister introduced this Bill he should have told us then what was intended to be done. Suppose it is done this way and a subsidy is given to a Council for the purpose of relieving a trader whose return or assessment by the Income Tax Commissioner is not greater than \$100; but you say that it does not interfere with the rate; the rate may be 14 cents or whatever the Council has fixed; how are you going to relieve him?

12.35 p.m.

You are then going to say to the Council that you will remit a percentage of his rate; what you are doing is giving them money for the purpose of making a tax relief. There is no reason why Government at this stage cannot grant a subsidy for a specific purpose, say, to buy trucks or to assist the Councillors in their tax relief; but do not tell them whom they must relieve. It is their duty when a case goes before a Poor Law Inspector or the Assessor to investigate the case. A shopkeeper whose return is \$100 might be entirely different from another shopkeeper whose return is also \$100. One may have ten children and the other may have none at all; his wife may be working in one case. All these things have to be gone into by the Councillors.

Mr. Speaker, it looks to me as if we are going in for class legislation, a thing which we have always avoided. When Government says that their position will direct the category of taxpayer to be relieved by 40%, 50% or 60%, how do they know that in that category there are not taxpayers able to pay their taxes, and others in a higher category who are unable to pay their taxes? It should be done at its source. Tax relief can only be done after proper investigation of every individual case. I wonder who advised them on this? They just do not know the repercussions from this Bill; what they are hoping for will not be encompassed in this.

This Bill was introduced in such a manner, and with such a lack of information; all I am saying is from my experience as a Councillor. They have told us nothing. They have dropped this Bill here and told us it is to relieve a class, but we all knew that last year when the Northern and Southern Councils were subsidised by Government, one class of taxpayer who could well afford his taxes was also relieved. Of course, you have to do that if you are going to lower the rate. If after that you then find that a section could be more relieved, all you had to do this year was to say you will increase both Councils' allotments of money which the Councils have placed for the purpose of tax relief.

In laying the rate every year and making up your Estimates, a sum of money should be put in the Estimates, say \$10,000, \$20,000 or \$30,000 for the purpose of tax relief or remission of taxes either in whole or in part. If the Southern Council put in for \$10,000, and if the Government knows that there is a category of taxpayer in the southern area whom they wish to relieve to the tune of \$50,000, it should increase that sum from \$10,000 to \$60,000 - the Government paying the other \$50,000 - and ask the Council by means of tax relief to relieve that category. The Council is in a better position to investigate every case and say that this person because of his circumstances at the moment is unable to pay or is deserving of relief.

Mr. Speaker, this year for the first time the Bridgetown City Council has varied the rate of tax on trade and on property. It is within our right under the Local Government Bill to do that. We did not do it last year. The rates were lowered from 17.8% to 14% on property and 17% on trade. That was done because, after the first year of Local Government, we realised where the burden was greatest. Properties had been revalued, and a sudden increase on valuation had taken place; people were faced now with tax bills that were doubled, and, in some cases, trebled over the previous year. We do not have to go into that all over again to lay the blame one side or the other. We know how it came about, and this year the Council in its wisdom did what we thought was right. We also wrote to Government and asked that a sum of money be paid in to the City Council - a sum which should be the amount of taxes they should pay on their properties. That was issued to Government about five months ago, but we have not got a reply as yet, although we have the confirmation of our rates excluding that.

12.45 p.m.

If it is the intention of the Government to do what all other Governments in the Caribbean and in England do, and what has been advised by two local Government Commissioners to do, the rate on properties could be reduced from 14% to 12% and at the same time keep the trade tax down to the same 12%.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is the hon. member saying that the Government confirmed their rates? Did you understand him to say that? If that is so, it is not correct.

Mr. GODDARD: That is what I am saying. A letter has been received by the Clerk of the Bridgetown City Council confirming the rates of the City Council.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: I want to say that the Government did not confirm the rates of the Bridgetown City Council. The Government varied the rates.

Mr. GODDARD: Let us get it straight. The Government varied and confirmed the rates. I said that the Government had confirmed the Council's rates and I still say that. They have confirmed the rates. There is nothing wrong in my saying so. What I am saying is that the variation which was made could have been.....

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to interrupt the hon. member, but in order to keep the records straight, I wish to say that Govern-

ment did not confirm the rates. The Government varied the rates and fixed the rates as is provided in the Local Government Act. The Local Government Act specifically gives power to the Central Government to fix the rates. That is what the Government has done. That is a different thing altogether from what the hon. member is saying.

Mr. GODDARD: They have confirmed our expenditure. They have not changed that at all. But they have varied the rates. The Government has taken off two per cent on property and increased the trade tax by .5%. That could have been achieved without increasing the trade tax. They have increased the trade tax for the City of Bridgetown, while we say that it could have been kept at what we had fixed it if they had replied to us and stated that they had been willing to pay their due.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to draw to your attention that the question of the rates of the City Council is not before us at all. The hon. member is only seizing this opportunity to put forward what transpired at the Bridgetown City Council. The rates have nothing to do with this at all, whether they were 12%, 14%, 18%, 20% or 25%, or whatever the case may be. We are dealing with a Bill to give the Government power to make grants in certain categories so far as taxation is concerned. We are not dealing with rates. This has nothing to do with the rates of the City Council or any other Council for that matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: All that the hon. member is saying deals with the principle of this Bill—at least, all that he has said up to now. I do not think that the hon. member has said anything yet outside of the principle of the Bill. I will say that the hon. member for Christ Church is the one hon. member in this House who very seldom strays from the subject matter of what the House is dealing.

Hon. M. E. COX: This is one time the hon. member is straying.

Mr. GODDARD: Thank you, Your Honour, for your ruling. Our method of dealing with the rates went a long way to meet what they are trying to achieve; and, in the same manner that we have laid two rates for the City Council, they could have directed the other two Councils to do the same thing. They could have directed the two Councils to lay a separate rate for trade if they had so desired; but, Your Honour, they probably did not wish the public to feel that they were following our example.

Another category of taxpayers needs to be relieved; and there is no better way of doing it than by amending the Local Government Act so as to exempt these small householders who owned the land. We have told them that before. There are many small householders who are owners of their property who could be exempted, while there is also another category of householders who live on rented property: but the value of the house is so low, under the old Vestry system, we would never have rated them; but under the new set-up, they are rated. Therefore, the Council has no other alternative but to send them a tax bill.

Mr. Speaker, I speak from personal experience. There are thousands whom we have to relieve in the City Council. In the first instance, it is an expense to the Council sending out tax bills to them; and in the second instance, when they send in for relief, we have to give them relief. A sum of \$36,000 is put aside in our Estimates for the purpose of tax relief. If the Government feels that in either one of these three Wards there is a category of taxpayers who should be further relieved, they can better do it by a subsidy to the Council to be earmarked for tax relief.

This Bill is not necessary; it savours of interference by Government into what rightly is Local Government business. These people are elected just as Government is elected. They are elected freely with the same wide franchise as members of the Central Government are elected. Let the Councils grow up, let them make their mistakes and let them do good work. At the next election, they will have to stand on their feet. Do not let us have to hide be-

hind Government. I am opposed to this form of interference.

If the Government feels that they can usefully use their money to improve a section of the services of Local Government, say so. Come out and give them a grant to buy so many trucks; give them a grant to put in some street lights. But whatever you do, let the money be spent by Local Government. By that means, you will be keeping to principles already laid down. I repeat, if there are some taxpayers who are too poor and unable to pay their tax rates, review the position and take them off the list altogether. Let there be a wider exemption. Then you will have a form of healthy Local Government.
12.55 p.m.

On those grounds, I do not see that we are getting anywhere. This is just an Election stunt; the Elections are around the corner, and this is one of the Bills to which we can look forward from now.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, the only element of surprise that I have found in this Bill which we are now discussing, is that the hon. junior member for Christ Church should be surprised that the Government should introduce a Bill of this kind at this particular time. I would not like to say that it is completely inadequate, but it is of the same colour and purport as the plethora of nonsensical legislation with which this House has been afflicted within the past three months by this Government. I am not reflecting on any vote of the House; this is something which I have had to say at very frequently recurring intervals. The hon. junior member for Christ Church should not be the victim of surprise by the explanation given by the Minister of Finance who is so inadequate as to his pronouncements made on the floor of this House from time to time.

The Minister of Finance, in his presentation of Bills, has a reputation for inadequacy, insufficiency and lack of comprehension of the matters with which he is supposed to deal. I do not want to be uncharitable, so I pass on to the provisions of the Bill which has been presented, 'presented' being the most charitable term which I can find at my disposal at such short notice. Without any danger of being accused of being dishonest, I want to say that in 1958-59 when the first rate was laid by the new Local Government authorities and the first trade tax which collectively was known as the "rate", all these rates were approved by the Governor-in-Executive Committee which is the Government of this Island. The Premier had confessed innocence by saying that he had signed the rates without reading them or some such nonsensical explanation which he gave to the public. He said that he was in England and he signed the papers which were sent to him but he did not read them. The only recourse, which the unwitting householders and those who suffered by the wide dragnet of Local Government, had available to them was what the members of my Party suggested at a public meeting which we called, there being a great updrive against the iniquitous burden which was imposed by the Local Government authorities, a burden imposed by the authorities dominated by the Government Party. Under Section 133 of the Local Government Act, 1958, we pointed out that the only thing left for the poor taxpayers to do (the Government having by negligence or design, confirmed the rates in the rating districts), was for them to have recourse to the provisions of Subsection (4) of this Section of the Act whereby the Rating Authority shall have power to reduce or remit the payment of any general rate on account of the poverty of any person liable for the payment thereof.

Long before the much publicised, the much maligned, the much over-rated Local Government Act came into force in 1958, that power was inherent in the exercise of the collection of rates by the much condemned eleven Vestries which we had in this island prior to 1958. There is nothing new in that provisions; that is the power which the Government does not intend to divest the local authorities of. I regret, Mr. Speaker, that I have to place my prepositions at the end of my sentences, but I have no less authority than Sir Winston Churchill for indulging in what is the easiest way of expression! And you, as a retired schoolmaster, will know that!

I will say that there is no such thing as the confirmation of the rates; there is the approval of the rates; and the Government cannot deny that they have approved the rates. But before they approve the rates, the Government has the right to modify such a rate or rates in any way they desire. What the Governor-in-Executive Committee cannot do is to increase the expenditure of the Local Government Authorities and say: "We think you should spend more money on so and so." What they can do is to modify the rate in any way in which they think fit.

1.05 p.m.

There is a lot of cheap politics going on now in the running of the affairs of this country whereby certain people are thinking that if they follow a certain step, somebody else may get the credit for it and that kind of thing. You cannot run a country on that basis. I have told them so from time to time, and that is why I have been at variance with them. Because they do not like the hon. senior member for the City to be Mayor, and because they do not like the services that he is carrying out which steals some of their thunder, there is the philosophy of personal politics going on in Barbados; they indulge in alterations and amendments to legislation to place power more securely in their hands so that we will have a gigantic system of nepotism and patriotism being exercised by the Central Government in contra-distinction to the Local Government Act. The patronage they are aiming at must be as large as that exercised by the Mayor of Bridgetown. That is all I see in this legislation, and that is what I am objecting to when they come with such to a responsible Chamber like this.

Mr. Speaker, we had a gentleman by the name of Mr. Lightbourne next door to us and we once had a gentleman by the name of Sir John Maude who was a Local Government Commissioner; and I was much castigated when I criticised the Government for appointing a Long Grade Civil Servant as Commissioner - a person without, I would not like to say, a formal education, but certainly no training in Local Government - because of his personal relationships with the Local Government Commissioner. Be that as it may, I presume the gentleman is trying his best; and I do not presume that this type of nonsensical legislation has emanated from his brain. At least, I credit him with a little more commonsense. But this is all part of a pattern.

This Local Government Bill of 1958 has cost the taxpayers of this island a large quantity of money. A Bill was rushed through here in 1953, another one in 1954, another one in 1956, while in 1957 there were sundry amendments to the 1955 Bill. The 1956-55 Act was actually printed into the laws of Barbados before they found out what the hon. senior member for Christ Church, myself and other members had told them all along that it was unworkable. They then got Mr. Lightburn, a Local Government Commissioner at a reasonable salary, and paid him to do what we have been telling them on the floor of the House to do all the time. They prefer to pay an Englishman to tell them what is wrong rather than to give any credit to the Opposition for making suggestions. That is a hangover from the slave mentality with which their forefathers were imbued. They prefer to pay Mr. Cadbury, Mr. Lightbourne and a host of other imported officials any amount of money to come down here to tell them what they have been told on the floor of the Legislature for the past eight, nine or ten years, and told by their own backbenchers sometimes, because they feel that they cannot too readily accept suggestions from the Opposition. The only suggestion they will accept from this side of the House is one to increase their travelling allowance! I will go so far as to say that that is the only kind of suggestion they are prepared to accept from this side of the House, so as to be able to go to the taxpayers and say the Opposition agreed that they should have a bigger salary and bigger travelling allowance.

Mr. Speaker, how are you going to run a country on that basis? However, let us get back to the sheep; and I do not refer to hon. members over there; I do not know the sheep from the goats; I am only using the expression. Let us

get back to the main point, as I am sure you have given me enough latitude in expanding that point which I have just made. Under the same Local Government Act of 1958 - and I challenge the hon. senior member for the City, the Mayor of Bridgetown, to deny this or any member of the Government - I was the first person in Barbados on the platform of my Party, before the rates were laid, to point out these things. Criticism can be of two kinds. Based on fact, it may be very destructive; but if you put yourself out of the way before a person makes a mistake to tell him what he can do to put both sides right, it shows that you are acting in an interested manner and in the interest of the community. So what did I do? We had a public meeting - and any of the hon. members on my right or opposite can deny this; some of the Government Ministers were present. (Hon. M. E. COX: Not I.) I called your name on the platform! I said that the City Council should read the Act very carefully and see that they could relieve the burden on the householders, because householders pay taxes purely for the benefit of being alive, whereas, contrary to the expression of opinion appearing in the daily newspaper of this colony that a trade tax is something iniquitous and it is double taxation, traders pay taxes purely on profit after all their expenses are taken out; but we householders, whether we live in a \$120 a month house, or like some other hon. members a \$120 a year house, or like some other hon. members in a \$1,200 a year house, pay purely for the benefit of being alive in Barbados. I pointed out at the time, before the 31st March and before the rates were laid in the corporate area of Bridgetown, that the sensible thing to do would be to reduce the rate on hereditaments; in other words, on householders; and to increase the trade tax commensurately without in any way interfering with your overall volume of money.

Mr. Speaker, I will illustrate what I mean. The hon. senior member for the City was present, the Premier was present and the other Minister was present at the meeting, and I called his name.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: On a point of order. I want the hon. member to know that I have not come so low as to attend any meetings. I have attended one meeting, during my political career, of my opponents.

Hon. M. E. COX: On a point of order. I would like to make it quite clear too that I have never attended any meeting held by any of them on that side. I have absolutely no intention at any time of attending any meeting held by them. I say further that from the report which I read in the *Advocate*, nothing was mentioned as to what he said just now.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe I heard the hon. member on that occasion and he never made the suggestion which he said he did.

Mr. BARROW: At least one Cabinet Minister was present. At that meeting, Sir, when I pointed it out, the Mayor of Bridgetown was present, and I welcomed the Premier and the Minister of Trade to the meeting who were down by St. Mary's wall. I only take people seriously when they take the oath, and if I take the hon. member's oath again, I will deal with him. The Hon. Premier was in his car facing south by St. Mary's wall.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am experiencing some difficulty now in hearing the hon. member who is addressing the House. I have just begun to experience some difficulty in so doing.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Minister for Communications said he was present at that meeting before 31st March, and he never heard me say what I did say. The Mayor of Bridgetown was there, the other Ministers denied they were present, but the Mayor can say whether I said so. I was the only person in Barbados - and I am not being immodest but we have to get the records straight - who pointed out that for all those years, they have been levelling a general rate on trade tax and they were compelled under the Local Government Act, or under similar legislation which they have, to impose

the same burden on the householders as that imposed on traders, and I gave my reason.
1.15 p.m.

I also pointed out then, and I will point out now, that the valuation for the City of Bridgetown for the previous year which had not been altered in any material respect from that made by the Central Government Valuers, was \$7,500,000 in assessable income from trade and from property, hereditaments and so on. Within the corporate area of Bridgetown, the assessable annual income was \$3,383,000 approximately. It may be \$3,380,000. I am positively sure that the assessable annual income from trade was \$7 1/2 million.

Now, I also pointed out on that occasion that if they increased by one per cent the trade tax, from 17.8% to 18.8%, they could take off a minimum of two per cent from property tax reducing the rate from 17.8% to 15.8%; and I said that this would not be any injustice because, contrary to what the Editor of the "Bajan" magazine and other diehard Conservatives were saying, there is nothing wrong with trade tax. Trade tax could not send you a bankrupt. I particularly pointed out that, now that you have Local Government, a Company Director is allowed to take off \$5,000 in the first instance while under the old Vestry system he was only allowed £600. And that \$5,000 is for every Director that is on the firm. Therefore, if you have two Directors, each is allowed \$5,000.

I do not know if my words did not reach the rural districts. I do not know what they intend to do with their rates, but the City Council reduced theirs after having a little surplus left over from last year, and it makes this disparity between the trade tax and the general rate. They are two separate and distinct things.

It is a matter of history in Barbados. No member of the Government ever suggested in public or before this House that they should modify or adjust the rates by creating this disparity. I am the person who said so. I told them privately and publicly. They are saying now that the Bridgetown City Council never created any disparity when they laid their rates.

What the City Council submits now to the Government is not like what they presented under the old Vestry system. On a careful reappraisal of the Local Government, Your Honour will see that the Councils can submit an estimate of their expenditure and the rate which they propose to lay. As a matter of fact, they do not submit their rates. I will go as far as to say that the City Council does not even submit the rate; what they say is that their income from trade sources and so on will be so much and their expenditure will come to so much - that is what the law says. As Your Honour knows, it is only then a question of arithmetic, because the Government knows from the Inland Revenue Department what the overall assessable annual income from trade for the corporate area is.

I will remind Your Honour of that by reading Section 197 of the Local Government Act. It says:

"(1) Before the commencement of every financial year or such later date as in relation to any financial year the Governor-in-Executive Committee shall approve, every Council shall prepare and submit for the approval of the Governor-in-Executive Committee an estimate of the income and expenditure of the Council during that year."

Does that not settle the whole problem? If you go to subsection 2, it says:-

"The Governor-in-Executive Committee may approve the estimate either as submitted or with such modifications as he thinks fit, so however that the total amount to be expended shall not be increased by the Governor-in-Executive Committee."

That is the delusion from which all sides appear to have been suffering because there are so many people in the new local authority.....

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the hon. member would care to quote subsection 2 of section 136. The Section which he has quoted is not the section to which we referred. We referred to subsection 2 of Section 136. Let the hon. member read that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. junior member for St. John is developing his point along his lines of reasoning.

Hon. M. E. COX: But we cannot afford to allow him to mislead, misinterpret, and give a wrong slant to what we have said here.

Mr. SPEAKER: I just wonder, if, by the Hon. Minister asking the hon. junior member for St. John if he cares to refer to subsection 2 of section 136, that can be a point of order. That is not a point of order. I told the Hon. Minister that he cannot just get up and ask the hon. member to refer to section 136, subsection 2, and expect that that hon. member should do so. The hon. member is free to refer to section 136, subsection 2. The Hon. Minister ought to know the liberty with which hon. members are allowed to debate things.

Hon. members cannot be confined by the opposing side.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, what is the hon. member interrupting for? Can he dictate how I may present my argument? I am the last person to discuss law with a layman. As a matter of fact, there is nobody on that side to discuss law with me. Long before I came into this House, long before I was twenty-one years of age, what I knew about this, he did not know. What I forget, he does not know.

What I was saying is this, Mr. Speaker; what the rating authority lays before the Executive is an estimate of their income and their expenditure. Of course, the rating authority has not disputed that. When the Executive receives that, they also receive from the Inland Revenue Commissioner the total assessable amount of hereditaments in the area and the total amount of trade which I said was \$7 1/2 million as opposed to \$3 1/2 million for hereditaments.

Mr. MOTTLEY: No, Sir, that is not so.

Mr. BARROW: I invited the hon. member to correct me if I am wrong, and he did not do it then. He wants to correct me now.

1.25 p.m.
I am speaking purely from memory. The amount is over \$3 million; I think it is \$3,383,000. I pointed out what they could do because there was a great outcry which came up from the householders who had never paid any rate in their life; but the Government approved the rates and they had the power at the time to modify them. The Premier said that he signed them by inadvertence; he did not look at them.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: On a point of order. First of all, I did not sign the rates; and secondly, what the hon. member is referring to was not done inadvertently.

Mr. BARROW: He said that he did not read them; he signed them and sent them back down or words to that effect.

Hon. M. E. COX: He did not say that.

Mr. BARROW: Well let the Premier deny it. It was printed in the Press. He said that he was in England and papers were sent to him and he signed them.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: On a point of order. Everybody in this House and throughout the island knows the hon. member. What I want to put on record is that I did not say that.

Mr. BARROW: For the sake of the record I would give him the privilege of saying what he did say for posterity.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot do that.

Mr. BARROW: I mean that I will give him the privilege of speaking on a point of order. Here is the former Deputy Mayor of Bridgetown.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think it is of vital interest to the public to have that point clarified.

Mr. BARROW: It was printed in the Press and circulated in the English Newspapers as well. Although the Government had the privilege of modifying the rates, they did not modify them. They did not make any concession to any particular department either to the payers of the trade tax, or to the payers of the general rate, or the householders within the corporate area or any other area in the island. Shortly after there was an outcry, they introduced a Bill to subsidise the Northern and Southern Districts to the tune of over \$300,000. The exact amount was \$331,000, as far as I can remember. Consequently, the rates for these two areas were approved; they are paying 33% and 26%, the general rate being the same figure in such areas. These two Councils were dominated by members of the Government Party which brought down a Resolution whereby the taxpayers of Bridgetown had to subsidise - it amounted to that - plantations. Let me come straight to the point; plantation owners and other ratepayers were subsidised. That Resolution had the effect of subsidising big plantation owners outside the corporate area of Bridgetown. It meant that the ratepayers, who were less well off, were called upon to provide the money. By this measure of subsidisation, the Northern District Councils were subsidising plantation owners in the country districts.

If the Premier had wanted to make out a case, he could have developed his argument to this point before I tore it to pieces; and he would have sat down and said that obviously that was an injustice. That is the whole *rationale* of the Bill. Throughout the length and breadth of this island people, including the hon. senior member for the City who also happens to be the Mayor, criticised them for doing something which did little to relieve the burden of the small landowner whose assessment on property had gone up sometimes 50%; and if they took off 6% they really did not relieve the burden. It ended up with the small landowner or householder paying more even by the subvention than he had paid in the previous year. That is the whole position.

It has been urged on the floor of this House and also outside, and it has been suggested by at least two of the advisers on Local Government, that in view of the fact that the Executive Committee under the Act of 1891 holds large areas of property in each corporate area, especially in the municipality of Bridgetown, the Government should make grants-in-aid in respect of those properties. That was done by the equalisation grants and block grants immediately after the 1945 English Local Government Legislation whereby the Central Government gave a subvention equal to the amount that the people would have been rated on and which they would have had to pay if they were subject to taxation. I want the Government to deny this, and the Mayor or any member of any Council can deny it: the height of folly in all this confusion about the changeover from the Vestry System to the Local Government System was that the valuation officers valued and assessed properties and the Local Government Authorities laid rates upon them and the Government accepted that the people living in housing schemes not owned by the occupants - not one of them is owned by the occupants - and they were those who went about telling people from Puerto Rico to Surinam that they had a scheme whereby the people in Barbados owned the houses which were built by the Government. That is not true. It was really under terms of the hirepurchase agreement for 33 years that the people occupied these houses, and if they defaulted for three months the property reverted to the Government; and they would be ejected, and they have been ejected, even without the force of the Courts of this island.

1.35 p.m.

I am saying that a man called Albert Maynard, otherwise known as "Alabama Joe" employed by the Housing Authority, went up under the cover of the agreement

signed by the Housing Authority which the Minister should know about, and ejected people with families, eight and nine small children when the fathers had gone to England and they had not heard from them, and threw their furniture outside. That was done in St. George, in the Pine Housing area, and at Colleton in St. John.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member has developed a lot on that point. If the hon. member wants to say that these people had to pay house tax or property tax, he can say so, but to deal with ejections and so on are a bit extraneous and unnecessary to build up as an argument.

Mr. BARROW: It is merely to illustrate the principle that they should be in a position to know that not one of these persons living in these housing schemes was liable to pay tax. According to section 136, which the hon. member is quoting, subsection 5 says:-

"Subject to the provisions of paragraph one of the Seventh Schedule to this Act, a rate to be paid in respect of any hereditament shall be borne and paid by the person who is the owner of such hereditament at the commencement of the day upon which the rating period commenced."

Nothing could be clearer than that. I wonder if the hon. senior member for the City who is Mayor of Bridgetown knows that even in the case of the Pine where they have all these houses, not only do the people not own the houses, but could not own them because no plan has been approved by the Board of Health for all these houses built up there up to now. How then could they sell something they had not perfected a title for? They have not sold one of these houses to people. But the Premier who went on a temporary excursion to the United Kingdom - for what reason we are still to find out, unless it was on vacation to see his family - in his lack of precision, indecision or whatever it was that caused him to approve and send back these rates in the form which they were, did not scrutinize them carefully enough at that time to realise that they were even taxing Government tenants.

Mr. Speaker, I see at least four members of the Local Councils over here on my right, and two members over there making six altogether, and I challenge any of the six of them to deny that these facts are correct, and that they did send out bills and demand notes to occupiers of Government houses, and that these Bills and these demand notes were highly illegal. We, the members of my Party, had to call a meeting telling people not to pay.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has digressed incidentally to inform the House that these people could not really be taxpayers, because they were not owners of property, but the hon. member should not go on repeating the incident. It is unnecessary to the point.

Mr. BARROW: I would only like to mention in conclusion that some members of the Government wanted to charge me for a public mischief, and said it in public, for telling the people that the tax was illegal and they should not pay it. Well, I will finish with that.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would like to say that it was on the advice of the Crown Law Officers that all those bills which were sent out were withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member referring to tax bills?

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am getting into this. That statement made by the Hon. Minister is not correct. I will get into this later on.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I am finished with that aspect of the matter. I take it that the hon. senior member for St. Thomas in his wisdom is saying that I did not hold a meeting in the housing areas and tell people not to pay the taxes long before the Crown Law Officers gave any ruling? It was when they went to the Crown Law Officers to see

whether my colleagues and myself could be prosecuted that this came to the notice of the Crown Law Officers. When they tried to prosecute members of my Party, the Crown Law Officers told them they were talking foolishness and that the bills were illegal. They went to get prosecutions, not advice.

Mr. SPEAKER: That may be very interesting, but still outside the ambit of this Bill.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: On a point of order. The hon. member is making a charge about somebody prosecuting him.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I have ruled. I am going to rule that there be no further reference to tax bills on holders of property in the Pine as such.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: That is not paid to us.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is fair to the House.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Excuse me, Sir, I did not say anything about being "fair". I said the tax is not paid to us; it is not our tax.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I have made my point and I have gone on the record to serve posterity. The machinery now, Sir, is this, if I may just sum up. The Valuation Officers who are paid by the Central Government—I believe in some instances they call for a proportionate part of their pay from the Local Government, I understand that they did call on the Local Government to make some contribution—and are under the control of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, go around under the authority of the Act and make valuations on all property in the island. The Valuation Officers have absolutely nothing to do with trade tax. The traders are supposed to send in returns. I am not talking about the *de facto* position. I thought the hon. member was challenging my interpretation of the Act. The point is that the traders are supposed to send in returns. If they do not send in returns, then they have authority to assess them at a certain amount for the type of premises, which is exactly germane to the position we are dealing with in this amendment to the Local Government Act. Every valuation therefore is done not by the Vestries but by the Valuation Officers to the Central Government, and I do not see why the Central Government should try to deny that they have valued property or that their officers have done it, because it is done all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, we have reached the stage now—again the philosophy of personal politics—where as soon as somebody tells you about something and that person is superior to yourself, you say it was not you, it was the other person who did it. That is not a satisfactory state of affairs. Government should stick by its officers through thick and thin; and if they find that they have exercised their powers *ultra vires* the authority they have, Government should stand behind them.
1.45 p.m.

But not one Valuation Officer was dismissed. We have to take it that, not merely by the approval of the estimates and rates under the respective sections 136 and 193 or whatever it is, they ratified the acts of the Valuation Officers, but the very fact that they have not dismissed anybody shows that they approved of the manner in which their Valuation Officers carried out their work.

I challenge the hon. senior member for the City to deny this. I do not know of a single case in which anybody has been over rated or has been charged trade tax over the income which he got. I do not care what they say, when you look at businesses in Baxters Road, you cannot tell me that a man running a rum shop with every conceivable kind of alcoholic beverage that has been produced under the sun in stock, and opening every day perhaps for twenty-four hours, can only make ten dollars out of that business. I say that if he can only make that amount of income he should pack up and go and work at Messrs. Costain Limited where he can get \$17 a week without that kind of headache. I have already said so in public.

You know to yourself very well that \$10 a week is a very conservative valuation. So why should the Local Government or the Central Government run down the Valuation Officers? I have always said that the rate on trade should be different from the rate on property. It is obvious that a man living in a 16' x 9' house with a shed roof and kitchen attached on somebody's land is in a different position. Under the old Vestry system, the authorities used to ignore rating on this kind of building; they did not consider it worthwhile to tax someone living in a building of that kind; but now, the dragnet has stretched very wide. If that is so, why should the members of the Government shelter and say that the high rate is due to the City Council? The point is that the Councils decide how much they want to spend, but there is nothing to prevent the Government from cutting down the expenditure.

If you read Section 197 of the Act, you will see that the only restriction on the Central Government is that they cannot increase the expenditure but they can cut it down; therefore, if we are accusing the City Council, it was competent for the Central Government to cut down all the extravagant expenditure wherever they found it; but they did not do it. As I have said before, whether it is the Hon. Minister of Labour or the Mayor of Bridgetown, I do not argue any law with laymen. I am not saying that that is so over my dead body.

The next thing is this. The Governor-in-Executive Committee have approved the rates for the City of Bridgetown, but they have not come in this year's Estimates for a single dollar, even as a token vote, to subsidise the Northern or the Southern District Councils. As we pointed out in the debates on the Estimates, it is predictable that some kind of subsidy would have been given to those Councils. They are not giving any subsidy to the Bridgetown City Council; nor has the City Council suggested that they should be given a subsidy or a grant in lieu of payment of taxation for certain property which the Central Government has now taken over and which was actually recommended by Sir John Maude who was one of their Local Government Advisers. Contrary to the situation in the United Kingdom where housing and education are largely under the jurisdiction of the County Councils outside of the City of London, the Government was in the habit of giving housing grants and education grants for specific purposes to the different Local Government authorities. I say "different" because there were five or six different Local Government authorities. What they have now is a kind of equalisation grant so that you would not have this large disparity. The district of Hampstead which I used to live in for a number of years, unfortunately, was in the position where the taxpayers had to pay a tax of twenty-eight shillings in the pound; but, next door, in Paddington, a place which may only be the width of a street separated from Hampstead, the taxpayers would be paying a rate of thirteen shillings or fourteen shillings in the pound; so because of these disequalities, the Exchequer gave an equalisation grant. This Government is not doing that. This Government is making no attempt to do that. I know some hon. members may be a bit surprised to hear of a County paying 27/6 in the pound, but that is quite in order. At the time of the elections for Local Government, particularly in the Northern and Southern Districts, I told the taxpayers to be very careful whom they put in the Councils because there was no limit to the amount of taxes those Councillors could impose on them.

If members of the Government were bringing a Bill to the House to try to get rid of these disparities and these disequalities in the general rate and in the trade tax, it would be something to which you would say that they were trying to do something. Of course, trade tax is predominantly for the Municipality although there are trade and enterprise outside of the Municipality. They have been making some suggestion about doing that, but up to now, they have done absolutely nothing about that. The rate in St. Lucy on the last occasion was 33 1/3%, the rate in Christ Church and St. George was 26.8% and the rate in the City of Bridgetown was 17.8% but it has now gone down to 14% on property and 14.5% on trade tax. The rates in the other two District Councils for property and trade are identical. There is no difference between

the trade tax and the general rate paid by householders and owners of hereditaments and rateable chattels.

The Central Government must make up its mind whether they are going to pursue the time honoured system of a general rate and a trade tax, which apply to all and sundry within the rated area, without fear or favour and leaving it then to the local authorities on examination of each case on its merits to decide in what direction and to what extent relief should be given; or the Government should make up its mind whether they are going to reduce the whole community to a state of eternal servitude to the Executive Committee where, if you want a dispensation or relief from anything, you will have to go to a Minister and ask him to do you a favour.

1.55 p.m.

Where I agree entirely with the former Deputy Mayor, the hon. junior member for Christ Church, is this: what is the machinery now which they are going to employ when they send down a *fiat* or mandate or whatever it is, to the Bridgetown City Council, telling them that they must apply a subvention to a particular category of persons? In other words, you will have not only owners of hereditaments but traders, the one employing a general rule and the other a trade tax which you are subsidising now. You take the subdivision where you have owners of hereditaments of not more than two bedrooms, those which have more than two bedrooms and those which have water-borne sanitation and dustbins. You may have those who support the Government Party, those who believe in Heaven and those who do not. Is that the kind of categorisation in which they are going to indulge?

Once we pass this Bill here it seems to me that the philosophy of personal politics will be carried one step further; that is a person can soon go to the Executive Committee and say: "Don't tax Mr. So and So of Alkins Land; he is one of us." There is no limit to the classes. You may have a class where every person in it has brown eyes and blue boots, and coloured people who support the Labour Party, or a class with eighteen pairs of shoes and fifteen estates, and in each class there may be one person qualified. I am not being frivolous, Sir, I am quoting now from the Chancellor of the University of Ceylon on Local Government. This is what he says in dealing with local finance:—"To show exactly what this principle means, let us compare the taxing power of Parliament with the rating power of local authorities....."

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member let us have the edition and the page?

Mr. BARROW: It is the 1931 edition page 135.

Mr. SPEAKER: Has the hon. member finished his quotation? He may finish the quotation.

Mr. BARROW: Professor Jennings goes on to say this:-

"Certain items of national expenditure are provided for by means of permanent legislation. These are called 'Consolidated Funds Services,' because they are paid for out of the Consolidated Fund, into which all national revenues are paid, without an annual vote by Parliament. They are few in number and are those services which, it is thought, ought not to be the subject of discussion in Parliament every year. The other Services are 'Supply Services', and the expenditure has to be voted every year. These services do not include expenditure of local authorities to be met out of rates, though they do include most of the grants which are paid to local authorities."

At this stage, it being 2 p.m. of the clock,

Mr. SPEAKER: It now being 2 p.m., of the clock, this sitting stands suspended until 2.30 p.m., of the clock.

This sitting now stands suspended.

2.00 p.m.

On re-assembling,

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, there is no quorum present, and I ask that you direct that the bell be rung.

On the bell having been rung, a quorum was obtained.

QUESTION TIME

Question Time was called.

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that there are no answers to questions ready. The House will therefore proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Private Members' Business was called.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 1, 2, 3. Is there any Order under Private Members' Business with which hon. members would like to deal? *(After a pause)* There being none, the House will revert to Government Business.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. SPEAKER: On the last occasion of Government Business the hon. junior member for St. John was speaking on a Bill to amend the Local Government Act, 1958.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, before the suspension of the sitting, I was quoting from the work of a person who is well known as an authority on Local Government. The Minister of Communications, Works and Housing expressed some surprise that local government was a matter of intimate and deep concern for lawyers and for constitutional lawyers particularly. It was at this juncture that I thought it fitting that I should quote from no less a person than Professor Ivor Jennings, Chancellor of the University of Ceylon.

What I am drawing to the attention of the members of this House, and particularly to the attention of those hon. members who may happen to be members of the Local Government Authorities, is that they have to exercise a constant vigilance over the attempts of the Central Government to spread its tentacles and to widen out the system of patronage in which they have been indulging particularly over the last two or three years, into every department, segment and sector of the civic and political life of this island. If we allow this kind of legislation to develop at the ever-increasing rate to which it has gone within the past six or eight months, very soon we will be asking the Ministers for permission to wake up on mornings and to go to sleep at nights, for permission to eat our meals, as we have already to do what is the equivalent of asking them for permission for our children to have a decent education.

2.35 p.m.

Although the hon. senior member for St. John, my colleague, the Minister for Education, has been a school teacher himself, it appears to me that he has allowed himself to succumb to the blandishments of the other members of the Government who would appear to deny education for all and sundry of this island. However, I am merely saying that by way of analogy.

Hon. L. St.A. THORNE: On a point of order. I would like my colleague to understand that at this age nobody could dare to think that they could convert me to any way of thinking they may have if I can see differently. There is absolutely no fear of anybody converting me when it comes to this sort of thing. I do not know that this Government has done anything so far as education is concerned that I could not approve of. I feel it is working within the context of its economy.

Mr. BARROW: Anyhow, I am grateful to my colleague for the assurance which he has given the House and me in particular, but his record will have to bear examination at another time. We are not discussing education, so I think we will pass on. I was merely expressing what is a growing fear amongst all men of goodwill in this island. We have had the recent example of the Fisheries Act and all the other

bits of legislation which are still the subject of debate where increasing provisions are being inserted in Bills, whereby instead of free interplay of the rule of law, instead of the citizen being in a position of knowing that such are his rights and such are his liabilities, we will find his rights more and more contingent upon getting dispensations from what the Ministers choose to call and what the Legal Draughtsmen elect to describe as the Governor-in-Executive Committee which is the Cabinet.

Now their conception of Cabinet Government appears to be that there can be no effective control of the economy of the island unless in a lot of little frivolous ways whereby you can force people to come and salaam and make obeisance to a Minister and ask the Minister to do him a favour. When in this Bill you insert a provision, the whole intent and purpose of the Bill being this provision that the Governor-in-Executive Committee can more or less dictate to the Local Government authorities that a particular subvention is to be applied for the relief of a particular category of persons, relief prior to the presentation of this Bill in this Chamber was dependent upon the rate-payer or taxpayer satisfying the Local Government authority that he or she was through poverty — and poverty is a relative term — unable to pay the particular rate; and so the taxpayer could apply for a remission or a reduction of the tax. But what they are saying in the Bill now, Sir, in Clause 2, subsection (c) which is going to amend Section 149 is that where any payment is made pursuant to the provisions of this subsection — and Your Honour will realise that that particular section is the one which gives the Government power to pay out of the Treasury of this island grants for the reduction of the rates of the three District Councils

We know from the recent visit of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Right Honourable Iain McLeod, that wherever the words "Governor-in-Executive Committee" appear in the legislation of this island, there shall be substituted "the Cabinet", and the particular Minister in charge of a Department will exercise all the functions of the Cabinet. That is one of the consequential amendments which will have to be made to the constitutional set-up of this island. If they do not know it, I am telling them now. (Hon. D. D. GARNER: Repeat that; I did not hear.) The hon. member can ask his informer to tell him.

The Section reads as follows:—

"Where any payment is made pursuant to the provisions of subsection (2) of this section", that is section 199, "the Governor-in-Executive Committee may direct that the amount of the contribution, or such part thereof as he may determine, received by a Council shall be applied by the Council for the purpose of relieving to such extent as the Governor-in-Executive Committee may direct, the amounts of the rates payable in respect of hereditaments of such class and of such rateable value as he may direct or the amount of the trade taxes payable in respect of taxable incomes of such class of traders and of such amount as he may direct, and in that event the Council in receipt of such contribution shall apply the same or, as the case may be, such part thereof accordingly without varying the amount per dollar of any rate or trade tax to be made by the Council."

All we have to say about this is that, whereas before relief was conditioned by your satisfying the rating authority that you were unable to pay on the grounds of poverty, this now makes it competent for any group of lobbyists, any pressure groups or any adherents of the political Party, to approach the Governor-in-Executive Committee and say: "We want you to give us exemption; so send a man to the Councils, City Council or District Councils, to say we are not to pay all, or any or only such part of the rate." That is all it amounts to. (Hon. M. E. COX: As far as your mentality goes.) It is better to have a mentality like mine than no mentality at all. If I may deal with that Minister, he goes around the housing schemes telling people he has put them in these houses; he telephones the Director of Public Works and tells him whom to employ, as well as the Director of Highways and Transport.

Hon. M. E. COX: On a point of order. We all have the experience of the hon. member for some time now, and we

know the hon. member cannot speak the truth even by mistake.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now the hon. member should withdraw those words.

Hon. M. E. COX: I will withdraw those words, but I am not going to give way to him.

Mr. BARROW: I will not allow points of order to be made the occasion for personal abuse of members. I do not think Your Honour should allow it.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no question of my allowing any hon. member to rise on a point of order as a means of insulting or offending another hon. member. I am surprised that the hon. junior member for St. John got on his feet and said so, because, when the hon. member said what he did, I asked that the words be withdrawn. The hon. member certainly cannot forget that so soon. I will ask the hon. senior member for St. Michael who was still on a point of order, I presume, not to effect that tone of speech which savours of such disorder.

Hon. M. E. COX: I would like the hon. member to state any time or any occasion on which I have ever asked any Head of Department for any job for anybody. I deny emphatically ever having done such. There is no Director or anybody in any Department or anywhere in my Ministry that I have ever asked for any job for anybody.
2.45 p.m.

Mr. BARROW: The hon. member has never asked; he has told, not necessarily the Heads of the Departments, but the subordinates whom to employ in certain jobs. The Departments which I talked about are the Highways and Transport Department and the Public Works Department.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will not allow these interruptions just for the sake of interruption. When objection is being taken to what an hon. member who is on his feet is saying, the hon. member must be allowed at least the opportunity of finishing his sentence, or at least to get to the theory of what he is saying. Then the hon. member who wants to put a point of order would be allowed to stand on his feet and make his point of order. The idea of a member getting on his feet because he has heard two or three words out of order when the rest may be just as well out of order, is out of place.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. junior member for St. John said that he knows of an occasion when I telephoned a Head of a Department, the Director of Public Works Department, and instructed him to take on a particular person. These are statements which you must nail in the head at the moment. All these malicious, lying, insinuating expressions you have to nail them in the head on the spot. He is not going to get away with anything. Let him say where and when and at what time.

Mr. BARROW: Since he has attacked me, I will give a reply and pass on. Trevor Maynard, St. John.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is quite out of order. The hon. member will only be allowed to continue his speech on the matter which is before the House.

Mr. BARROW: It seems as if I will have to exercise a great amount of restraint in this House.

Hon. M. E. COX: You better had.

Mr. BARROW: Let me go on. I am opposed to this kind of legislation because it is the philosophy of personal politics, where you are trying to centralise power more and more in the hands of a few Cabinet Ministers. That is not a democratic principle. The Hon. Minister of Trade has interrupted with personal abuse whenever I say so. Why has he taken it so? It is there for everyone to see.

Hon. M. E. COX: You cannot help.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would just like to warn the hon. member again to desist from being personal.

Mr. BARROW: If you do not want me to deal with him, Mr. Speaker, you had better deal with him.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know if hon. members are experiencing the heat of this summer and as a result want a holiday as from today. If hon. members reply to each other in the vein they seem to be in today, I will promise them within the next two or three hours a holiday, but not inside the House. One cannot allow this sort of thing in this House of Assembly.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that it is a philosophy of personal politics. Week after week, when there are 26,000 unemployed in this island and grave problems confronting the masses of the people who are unfortunate to exist under the benighted leadership of that Government, when there is growing illiteracy, when children are not being able to get in secondary schools, all that that Government is doing is to bring down this nonsensical legislation and expect us to entertain it. It is unfortunate that there is no enlightened public opinion or an impartial press which would have the courage to demonstrate the ignorance and the folly and the lack of public leadership which this Government is giving the people. If the hon. member wants to get up and oppose me, let him get up and do so. I do not see any reason why parliamentary debate should be reduced to this level. Unfortunately, we have people sent into this Chamber because they exercise this system of patronage; and this Bill is another attempt to patronise a section of the community perhaps to the dereliction of other sections of the community.

When I spoke of my knowledge of what the Public Works Department was being used for, it was only an illustration of what I was saying of patronage. All that happens in the Public Works Department, the Highways Department and even in housing schemes; and it has extended to the point where the Premier himself interferes with the Public Service Commission. The Attorney General is going to resign because of that. The Hon. Premier tells the Public Service Commission whom to appoint.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not have to deny that. The hon. member has spoken and the hon. member knows that he speaks the truth, so I do not have to deny it.

Mr. BARROW: I thank the Hon. Premier for giving the Minister of Trade, Industry and Labour, the lie. The Hon. Premier has assured the House that I speak the truth. It is a fact that these things go on. I held these things back for a long time.

Mr. SPEAKER: It may be quite interesting and it may be even something else for hon. members to be indulging in this kind of thing, but it is not pertinent to the House, now considering this amendment to the Local Government Act, to hear or to be amused by such information. I know that hon. members can indulge in that to their hearts' content at different times of the year, but certainly the proper thing to do, if hon. members want to serve the public interest in this way, is to deal with it specifically by a Resolution or by some authorised motion. This is not the way that it is done in a Parliamentary Chamber.

Mr. BARROW: While Your Honour was speaking, the Hon. Minister of Trade was dropping a lot of *sotto voce* remarks which could be heard on this side of the House. I know where my inheritance comes from which is something more than he knows.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member sit a while. The hon. member may have been justifiably aroused or interested by *sotto voce* remarks made by the Hon. Minister of Trade while I was addressing the House. I regret that those remarks made in a *sotto voce* manner were so audible as to

reach hon. members' ears. Had they reached mine, I would be on my feet and would have told the Hon. Minister that that was unbecoming in this House. As it happened, I did not hear them; my interest was in what I was saying, in letting my remarks reach the ears of the hon. junior member for St. John because it is my wish — and I hope it is the wish of hon. members too — that this debate should be concluded in a peaceful manner. I will do all in my power to see that is so, but I can only do it with the aid and assistance of all hon. members of this House. It can only be done under those conditions.
2.55 p.m.

Mr. BARROW: It has reached a stage that, after all of these Local Government Acts from 1953 onwards to 1958, when all of them were enshrined in the Statute Law and passed by both Chambers, they found that the Act was not perfect and they had to bring down Mr. Lightburn. The Acts having been gone through with a fine tooth comb and finally codified and consolidated by the Act of 1958, we now find a new principle being introduced in the relationship between Local Government and Central Government whereby the divine right of granting relief is impinged upon in so far as it is exercised by the rating authority. The Government is arrogating to itself the right to say who should pay taxes and who should not pay taxes; and I say that that is contrary to the constitutional relationship which hitherto has existed in democratic countries, particularly in the British Empire, between Local and Central Government, and to the historical development on which our own institutions are based. That is contrary to the acknowledged principles and tradition, although tradition itself is no recommendation, but there is a tradition inherent in the rule of law that a Government interferes in such departments of the economy as are necessary for the successful development of the well-being of all. It is also important and inherent in the democratic principle that there should be as wide as possible an allocation of all powers so that we do not creep stage by stage, with ever-increasing rapidity, towards the state of centralised dictatorship.

The only *rationale* of the Bill is that the Ministers want more personal power in their hands. They do not like the Mayor of Bridgetown, which is clear from the pronouncements and mispronouncements on the facts. They do not like the Bridgetown City Council because it is not controlled by them, and they want to dictate to them that they have a moral duty within the Local Government area, that they should give some kind of subvention in lieu of the exemption which they enjoy as trustees to the public. They know that eventually they will have to give it, but they want to give it to be applied for political purposes. I am not mincing any matters; they would like to take away freedom of speech. The scurrilous way in which they abuse members of the Opposition is an indication that they resent any facts being brought to the public.

It is true that they have control of the daily newspaper of the island because nothing detrimental to the Government of this island or to the Barbados Labour Party on issues, no matter how far-reaching and important it may be to the welfare and salvation of the inhabitants of the island, is allowed to spoil the beauty and immaculate presentation of the filth which appears in that journal. In the Press, the people can be regaled with articles on sexual aberrations, but never with any criticism of the Government. That is the fare to which the public is treated in the Press of this island. Day after day we come in here and make pronouncements on matters which are of vital importance to the rule of law and the exercise of the democratic rights of the public, but nothing is said about these matters in the Press. We have to repeat these matters to the point of tedium so as to make sure that there is one record to which posterity will have recourse and that there are no omissions from that record when we hold them up for examination in ages to come to show whether we are aware or unaware of our constitutional rights.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment to the Act is an attempt to carry the philosophy of personal politics a step further, to make it appear to the members of the public that even

when relief is given in Local Government taxes in any of the Councils, you must go to the Ministers and get them to create a category and say, "You made this category and you must give us relief." This matter can be carried to ridiculous extremes. Let us say that a Conservative Government comes into power. A Government which is more conservative than the present Labour Government can hardly be envisaged, but if a Government which is more conservative than the present Labour Government came into power, they may say that all merchants who have been assessed on more than £10,000 profit should not pay any local government taxes. The merchants could advance a very good reason, they could say that they are paying 40% company taxes already, or they may bring forward some such platitudinous excuse.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the principle of local government taxation has always been fixed on a *pro rata* basis. You have an assessment - a big assessment for a small man. I cannot remember if the hon. senior member for St. Peter also made the suggestion, but the suggestion was made on the floor of this House by the late lamented junior member for the City, Mr. A. E. S. Lewis, that there should be a system of progressive taxation for Local Government as well, and companies should have a flat rate and they could hardly have relief from that. They pay taxes on profits. There is no question of iniquity in trade tax because it is a tax on profits, but as far as owners of rateable hereditaments are concerned, if you want to have progressive taxation, the fact of which we do not approve is that a Minister should be given the right to send down a local authority and say: "This is the class of persons to whom I am going to give a grant in aid; therefore do not put any taxes on them at all."

3.05 p.m.

If you are going to give a grant-in-aid, give it and let everybody progressively share the relief which that affords; but do not pick out a particular category of persons who is going to judge who is most deserving. Don't the Ministers have enough work to do? Who is going to advise them on this? What kind of machinery are they going to use when most of them know absolutely nothing about Local Government taxation and Local Government politics as such? That is why they floundered around last year and up to now cannot sign the rates for the Northern and Southern District Councils.

This is some five or six months, perhaps, after the tax bills have gone out. Christmas is drawing near, and the people in the Northern and Southern Districts do not know where they stand. That is a disgraceful and disreputable state of affairs. If I do not vote for this, it is not because I do not want people to get relief; nobody in Barbados can accuse me, who was threatened with prosecution for telling people in housing areas not to pay the tax, who got in the Lower Green and told the City Council how to ease the burden on householders, of not wanting to give some kind of relief to the overburdened taxpayers of this island. As a matter of fact, I would pay eight times the amount of tax in England as I pay in Barbados, because in that country you get something for the money you contribute to Local Government. But down here, apart from poor relief which keeps the Central Government in power because they are absolved from the responsibility - the person who is keeping this Government in power is the Mayor of Bridgetown by spending \$1 million in poor relief. People would have had a revolution long ago had they realised where the burden is being imposed and from which direction it is coming.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add my quota. I would say at the beginning that I am not going to argue in here who should have credit for this and who should have credit for that. I am sufficiently competent, capable and knowledgeable upon this Local Government subject to argue convincingly. When it comes to who should be given credit for anything, or however the Government might go around this, to me they have the power and if they want to pass this, they can pass it.

What the hon. junior member for St. John said just now is absolutely correct. Government must bear in mind that they will not always govern. My Party will not always run the City Council; I am not a fool to think so. You can pass all the legislation you want to do now; it may do some harm, but what the hon. member said is correct. There is an existing section in the Local Government Act which gives power for tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to recite what was said already. I understand that my colleague, the hon. junior member for Christ Church, has already made the position of the City Council clear. Whether the members of the Government like or dislike me, that is a matter for them. I have not worried about that for the past twenty years, and I have been going on; I am still enjoying health, and I am more interested in that than anything else. Under the Local Government Act the Government can give a grant to the Local authorities. As you know, Sir, the Government last year gave a grant to the two other areas, but they did not give the Municipality a grant.

Hon. M. E. COX: On a point of order. I thought the member would have said that the City Council did not apply for a grant. Grants were applied for by the Northern and Southern Councils, but up to now, so far as I know, the City Council has not applied.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wonder why the hon. member got up. I only make speeches in my way; I speak as I feel, and I have never been dictated to as to how I should speak. What I said is as clear as a pikestaff. I am repeating that the Government gave the other two areas a grant and did not give the Bridgetown City Council. I go further and say that the Government actually told the other two Councils to apply for a grant. That came out in the Press; so I have not made any untrue statement.

Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member said, this Bill seeks to give them a little personal power. Sometimes people say to me that they wonder if I were in Government what would be my position, and what I would do; but I just smile, nod my head and go ahead. It is a question of the survival of the fittest. Some shocks never get cushioned; there were no shock absorbers in this, and these gentlemen have not been able to apprise themselves of what is happening. It is peculiar, Mr. Speaker, but you know quite well enough that kings are made by people and kings are destroyed by people; dictators are also made by people and destroyed by people, and Governments are made and destroyed by people.

3.15 p.m.

Just before I came in here, one member - I am not supposed to call his name - said to me: "When all is said and done, when we all sit down, we know that this form of Local Government is something which we have to do and that the old Vestry system was outmoded." I said a few days ago that I held out the "Olive Branch", but let it not be believed that I said so because one hair in my head was afraid. I said so really in the interest of getting something workable. Do not let the Government fool themselves that I am in any way afraid. What has happened is that the Government is afraid of admitting that that form of valuation does not altogether relieve those people to whom relief should be given. It was strongly supported by Mr. Julian Mahon of Lion Castle that their method of relieving in the Northern and Southern Districts on the last occasion was one which caused about \$90,000 of the money they provided to go into the hands of the big landowner. It did not go into the hands of the small taxpayer. The hon. senior member for St. James himself did not see that.

Sir, you have to do something like this, but this is not the way to do it. I argued then that you were giving \$100,000 and odd to the Northern and Southern area of which amount Lion Castle and Edgehill were getting the greatest amount of relief, lock, stock and barrel. They were the people who got more relief than anybody else. Your Attorney General and your financial adviser would not accept what I said. Now that you have seen your error, you come along and

say: "We want to see that your rate is going to be 16 cents or 18 cents and if we give to you \$100,000, we want to see the rate on property owners much lower indeed."

Sir, you know how the general rates are laid in the rural areas. Eighty percent of the taxes in the Southern area are paid by fifteen percent of the people and the other twenty percent of the taxes are paid by eighty-five percent of the people. I said that in the Lower Green, and the Government pooh-poohed my remarks. I argued that right on the floor of this House when you were passing this Resolution to give those two areas a subvention. What did I say? I said that you were giving tax relief to the Barbados Shipping and Trading Company which owned the Bulkeley group of plantations. That Company was paying the majority of taxes, therefore, you were giving the majority of that money to them. I said then that that was the wrong way to do it. I am not going to accuse Government by saying that you did it, as the hon. member has just said, for somebody to come to you with cap in hand and ask a favour. What the hon. member who has just sat down said, is right. I contended then that you did it the wrong way; and I most respectfully contend that you are still doing it the wrong way. You do not think so but when we go to the public and explain, they are going to hear my argument and they will hear yours.

I have observed that a member of the Northern Council gave notice of a motion and, as I read it in the newspaper, I thought that it had emanated from one of the Ministers of Government because it was so sensible a thing to do. I said in here that that motion must have come from a Minister. I said that that member has seen the light of day by putting forward that motion.

What is the position today? The Local Government Act says that you must rate everybody in Barbados who lives in a house that is valued to \$125 which is roughly \$10 a month. If, however, you rent the house it does not matter; you do not pay the rate. The Government has never seen the wisdom of even asking us to make a suggestion. You have not been decent enough to ask us where the burden lies, where most of the applications for tax relief come from. In this island with 48,200 houses, you have close on 26,000 in the Municipality. You do not want to ask me, but I can tell you. Surely, there are some hon. members over on that side to whom I can tell it.

You have brought in an Act but you have not read it thoroughly. I am going to prove it to you. You come in with this amendment to Section 199 of the Local Government Act to say when the Councils are given the money, the way in which that money must go. Now, tax relief can be granted by a Finance Committee. That is provided for, all over the world; but what have you done now? Why give Dowding Estates Limited, the Shipping and Trading Company, Musson, Son and Company, Mr. "Josh" Haynes, Mr. Lisle Ward and others like those relief, and pin your burden down on the small man? If you have brought this Bill to ease the small man, the way in which you have drafted it is wrong. The bulk of the people who send in for tax relief are the people who were not rated before, and the reason why they are rated now, is because of your method of assessment. At present, your system says that if I own six perches of land which is about 2,000 square feet, with a 12' x 8' house on it, I will have to pay taxes. According to your system of rating, that house with that little land is rated because it comes to about \$126 annual income; but my colleague on my left owns a two-roofed house on rented land next door to that, and because it is on rented land, in the opinion of the Valuation Officer, it is not of annual value of \$10; therefore, it is not rated. If we go through your rate books, we will find several thousands of these cases within the Municipality. I have not said that the Municipality contains all of the houses; but I say that more than half of the houses are in the Municipality and, as a result, we should pay some regard to that.

3.25 p.m.

You have got to get money with which to run the area; you must look after the poor and so on. Originally, the old Conservatives were hard, were they? But they said,

"Out of sugar, we will make money." The only land which was exempted was land which was planted in trees. You have to carry on your Infirmary and so on. You exempt all you can, but those who are strong must bear the infirmities of the weak. You say that we can own all of Bawdens, and those acres are valueless as far as agricultural land is concerned. You have to run the area still; you let these people go free whereas other people have to pay for it. I say that it is your solemn duty to raise the exemptions since your valuation list stands for five years.

The Premier once said that they would go into this matter of the valuation, but I know that that could not be done unless you amended the Act. It has been often said to us in this House that the House can do anything except to make a man into a woman. The correct thing to do in this matter would be to pass legislation having for its object the raising of the exemptions. Originally under the 1911 Act property was valued at \$3.00; the value is greater now. The house which you rented at \$10.00 a month is now rented at \$30.00 a month and therefore your exemptions must be increased. That is obvious. I saw that a notice to that effect was given at one of the Councils and I said, "Now you are seeing the light of day."

The Hon. Premier knows that under the old system, you had a five-year average on which you could rely. I want to say that if this is the advice which you have been given by Sir John Maude and Mr. Lightburn, well, follow it; but there is other advice which you do not follow. Directors are now allowed to draw \$500 a month, and if ten Directors draw this amount, you must still run the parish; and whence are you going to get the money with which to run the parish if you do not pass on the burden to other people? If the burden falls heavily on these people you cannot say, "We are sorry that the burden has fallen on these people" and then suggest that this is the way to deal with it. This might be the political way of doing it, but it is not the scientific way. The members of the Government often say that they will follow the practice which obtains in England and in other places, but when it comes to doing that in Barbados they will bring forward a hybrid because they think they can spite the people in the City Council.

Mr. Speaker, this is all nonsense. Have you ever heard of anybody trying to get somebody else in a hole or a cesspit unless he himself gets down there? What about an equalisation grant? You cannot say: "I am going to take these names and these are those whom I will relieve without affecting the rate"; there is a difference between what is before us now and tax relief; in the case of tax relief, that is dealt with by the members of the Finance Committee. While you are relieving persons who are paying taxes below such-and-such a figure, will you tell me that a big taxpayer is not a small one too? Have you taken the trouble to find out where this burden has been most hardly felt? You have not taken the trouble to do that, but you merely come down here and ask us to agree to amend this Act.

In a matter of this sort, it is to be done by way of an equalisation grant. If you feel that the services in the area of the North and of the South, such as sanitation and other services, should be set up to the standard of the Municipal area where you collect more taxes, if you think that the standard should be the same, then you have every right to give an equalisation grant. You can earmark a grant for equalisation purposes. Do you think that the grant in the area of the North or the South should be any less than in the Municipality? I do not think so because it takes a person no less to live in the North or in the South than it takes to live in the Municipality.

This section 199 of the Local Government Act was particularly put in here so as to give you the latitude for doing what should be done. If you would look at the Section 2 of this Bill which amends Section 199 of the Act you will find that it says this in the new Subsection to be numbered "(4)":—

"Where any payment is made pursuant to the provisions of subsection (2) of this Section, the Governor-

in-Executive Committee may direct that the amount of the contribution, or such part thereof as he may determine, received by a Council shall be applied by the Council for the purpose of relieving, to such extent as the Governor-in-Executive Committee may direct, the amount of the rates payable in respect of hereditaments of such class and of such rateable value as he may direct or the amount of the trade taxes payable in respect of taxable incomes of such class of traders and of such amount as he may direct, and in that event the Council in receipt of such contribution shall apply the same or, as the case may be, such part thereof accordingly without varying the amount per dollar of any rate or trade tax to be made by the Council." 3.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, if you came along and said you were going to raise the rates and instead of rating a house at £35 per annum you raised it to £150 per annum, I am sure that when you raised it you will find that you will in turn be able to give to the areas a grant for the purposes of sanitation and public assistance. The Minister of Trade seems to have taken me up on the fact that we did not ask for a grant in St. Michael. We did not ask for a grant, but no one would have expected the Hon. Minister of Trade who represents St. Michael to sit by and wait for us to ask for a grant. You would have thought that his heart would be bleeding for his constituents who had to pay his heavy burden levied by the Municipality. At least the Government has three members in the Municipality, but I think it has three too many. (Hon. M. E. COX: You did not want it.)

Mr. Speaker, in one breath we are accused of being Conservative, and in another breath we are accused of being reckless spenders. (Hon. M. E. COX: You carried over \$1/4 million.) The hon. member said that we carried over \$1/4 million. Ask him why and who are responsible for carrying over the \$1/4 million. Some clerk has always been able to come and say "look, they have carried over \$1/4 million", - (Hon. M. E. COX: It is not done like that.) and therefore he feels we do not need it. Anyhow I would leave that for the political platform. I am not going to make personalities or anything of the sort now. I prefer to deal with this as I see it.

I believe the Deputy Mayor must already have spoken about it, but we wrote them five or six months ago. There is great discourtesy by the Government of Barbados to the Bridgetown City Council purely because of envy, malice and hatred. A year ago we wrote them saying that we had to pay people to collect their taxes for highways and so on for which we originally got 2%. We asked whether they would compensate us for it. Today, we hire four people. There has not even been an acknowledgment of the letter. If you wrote the Landship "Excelsior", the Admiral would send back a letter even if the spelling was bad; but the Government of Barbados has not made an acknowledgment because it is the City Council who wrote.

The hon. member said we did not ask for a grant, but five months ago we wrote a letter reminding them that Sir John Maude and Mr. Lightburn said that Government should pay or give a grant in lieu of payment for all Government property. We feel there would be no point in asking them to pay for the Public Buildings, schools or social services, but we do feel when you have a Chief Justice in a house from which you are collecting rent as well as the land which you are buying day after day, you should pay for those things. Only on the eve of discussing the Minutes did they rush off a letter to say that they were considering the letter. The Government of Barbados cannot accuse me of receiving a letter from the Premier or any other Minister whether I like or dislike him and not replying. I always direct all employees of the City Council to acknowledge with courtesy any communication from any man.

Mr. Speaker, they have five months to tell us whether they have all the Housing Authority property valued. I must say in passing that what the Hon. Minister of Communications said is not correct in reference to the

Attorney General advising them that they were not to collect taxes on such property. I would like to tell him what happened. We do not take the Attorney General's opinion; we have our legal advisers. Properties were rated and bills sent out; so when the Minister of Trade said that they did not collect \$250,000 in taxes on properties through rates because the Inland Revenue Department was advised that they could be rated, I do not want to place any blame too heavily on the legal department. After the bills were sent out, the Secretary of the Housing Board, acquainted with the Act as he is, drew our attention to the fact that certain people could not be rated or one cent collected. We were quite surprised when it was drawn to our notice and we asked our legal adviser who himself did not realise it. Everybody was looking at the Local Government Act. I understand that the Department responsible for rating was told that it could rate. Only when Mr. Lashley got the bill he advised us to look under the Housing Authority Act and see that they were exempt from taxation.

As a matter of fact, Government had no trouble doing this at all, because with the Valuation Officers at their disposal, they could have asked me for a list which I could have given them in two days. All they had to do was to get the necessary assessment on all the property within the municipal area, and if the rate was going to be 4 cents, 10 cents or 12 cents in the dollar, that is what we would have passed on to them. I do not expect you to pass rates for schools, but if you buy land and you give no subvention of any sort, and if the Government, Mr. Speaker, in their new system of valuation give all these exemptions to the big taxpayers and to pioneer industry - as a matter of fact the only tax we can get from pioneer industries is by way of property - money must come from somewhere. 3.45 p.m.

If, Mr. Speaker, they can give all these exemptions to Pioneer Industries and to people who are living on Government property, it is commonsense, it is second standard arithmetic, that if you must have \$200 to spend and by those exemptions you have reduced the sources from which you could get that amount to \$150, obviously, you must create a greater burden on the people who must pay it or you must give a subvention.

Up to now, you have not said that the City Council was extravagant. I know that the Hon. Minister of Trade is too shrewd a politician to say that. Up to now, you hear all this talk about buying votes and about giving the people this and that, but the Government is too wise to interfere. The hon. senior member for St. James spoke the truth when he said that the whole thing wants scrapping and throwing into the sea. However, it is our duty to co-operate and get Local Government working. The members of the Government up to now have not been able to make any fun at the City Council. We have tried to get it working; therefore, if they have refused to give us a subvention, to give us anything for the property which they have taken away from us, what do you expect?

I said last year that even when you reduced your rates to the percentage it is today, those persons who have been asking for tax relief, those persons who are crying out over their taxes, even by this reduction, their taxes will still be 50% or 70% higher than what it was in 1958. This is because your valuation has increased tremendously. The hon. junior member for St. John said that he did not think anybody was overvalued. That is a matter for him. I represent the City of Bridgetown and I will see to it that I keep my seat in the City. He represents the parish of St. John. Even with your reduction, the people's taxes are still going to be 50% or 75% more and it is because of your valuation. Your valuation had to go up and your expenditure in the municipal area has increased year after year. Nothing remains stagnant.

I wonder what the Hon. Minister of Trade, the Minister of Agriculture and the Hon. Premier would say if our expenditure had remained at \$1 million over all this period of years. They would have destroyed us. They would have said that the Conservatives did not want to help the people. Now

that you are spending money, they say that you are getting reckless.

We have sent our Estimates to you and you have not taken out any of the reckless expenditure which you talk about. You took nearly five months to go through our Estimates. The Estimates of this island, Mr. Speaker, are usually placed before us during the middle of February and we are asked to finish them within three weeks; but the Estimates of the City Council went before the Governor-in-Executive Committee and they took five months before they sent them back to us. You say, "Oh these diehards, they are either not spending too much or they are spending too much!" (*Laughter*).

In passing, I want to say this here and now. The letter which we received in this respect came from the office of the Hon. Premier. I am going to be charitable in this respect, and say the Hon. Premier should be better advised at times. We received a letter from your office telling us that wherever the word "etc." occurred, it should be deleted. I am sure that had the Hon. Premier looked into the Government's Estimates, he would have seen that under every Head, we had followed step by step what the Government has done and he would not have made that error.

Throughout the Government's Estimates for last year at no point have you seen items coming under "Incidental" itemised. If I may draw an example, under the Head "Mental Hospital", there is the item "Incidentals" for which \$4,700 is voted and the note to it says that it includes for Account Books, Manuscript Books and Registers, Postage etc., Christmas Festivities, Provision for cigarettes, tobacco etc. Yet the Government wants to ask the City Council, as far as incidentals are concerned, to itemise them and show them where the expenditure lies.

I will not change anything in our Estimates. All that the Governor-in-Executive Committee has to do is not to send them back. We have had a showdown already and we will have a showdown again.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to vote for this Bill as it stands. I believe this is the wrong approach. According to the hon. junior member for Christ Church, they have done it in this way because they believe that in this way they can hold the power in their hands.

You are passing legislation for posterity. I have always said in here that whatever goes up comes down. If you pass this legislation as it is, you may be removed from your position tomorrow and by such an event, this would be put in the hands of another Government. That Government may very well say: "Cancel this class of taxpayers." In other words, that can happen if you have a diehard Government. Do not argue that things are impossible. All things are possible with God. You are not passing legislation for your Party in power. You cannot pass legislation to say that a body can direct the class of taxpayer from which you must relieve the tax. I repeat that this is not the way to do it. It has to be done by way of an equalisation vote or getting your statistics in all three Wards.

You are becoming panicky. Can you remember when you were going around holding your meetings that you said that I was the person who was doing this and that? What is really necessary is for the Hon. Premier to get from the three Wards the type, the classes, the number and in what capacity the increased taxation has been effecting a hardship on the taxpayers. I am sure that when you get this information, you will increase your exemptions.

I have not seen before me, at least in any large proportion, any people who were carrying on trade or any people in big business who were asking for relief from paying their taxes.
3.55 p.m.

Ninety-five percent of the applications for tax relief are from people who feel the burden; and if you get these statistics from the three areas you should amend your

Act to increase your exemptions and you will be relieving these people who are least able to pay.

Mr. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, a Bill of this nature is a simple one but it gives one the opportunity to review something which is new. The Local Government Act is new. I do not propose to take the line which the hon. junior member for St. John has taken, nor that which the hon. senior member for the City has taken; they have taken a long time to make the salient points in this Bill. I would excuse the hon. senior member for the City who spoke in his capacity of Mayor. The community must understand the type of democracy which allows the Party in power to work against the interest of the community on occasions when you have to examine it. When you think of the few people who make up the Party, it does not necessarily mean that they are possessed of all the wisdom to do all the right things at the right time.

At this stage, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair.

Mr. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was going on to say that sometimes we expect too much from human nature in these things. Unless we are prepared to make a very brutal analysis of the situation, we cannot get to it correctly. The Hon. Premier introduced this Bill but he showed a lack of knowledge and a lack of awareness of the very Bill which he was introducing. This is an age of Party politics, and if it had not been for Party politics, the Premier would not have been Premier either by referendum or by popular vote. That is one of the evils and disadvantages of Party politics. He is the Premier without the breadth or real understanding of what is taking place; he is the Premier of a Party, a member of which has said that this whole Local Government Act wants burning up, because that member of the Party came into this thing at 70 and he did not know what it is all about.

When we were discussing the "Maude" Bill, one of the Ministers, the one who is now going out of the Chamber, asked the people not to vote for adult suffrage; and he is one of those people who are administering something, the tenets of which he does not believe in. They are fighting against the Conservatives; the Labourites as against the Whigs and Tories are the people who are responsible for this type of legislation. Because you have an amorphous organisation of various types, you have legislation in which a Conservative can reign in the Municipality. Now they have awakened and they are passing this legislation; they have introduced a Bill and by their own action they had to introduce a Resolution on the 17th November, 1959, making a grant of \$331,540 to two Councils in order that the Dowding Estates and the Shipping and Trading Company can receive money; and the Premier is now saying that he is correcting what he did. He is like the boy who failed his examination and when his mother asked him why he failed he said: "As soon as I was going to pass, they stopped the work!"

It is pathetic to hear the Premier of a Government say that he is passing something to correct, not what the hon. senior member for the City has done, but something which the Government has introduced. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would not like to involve you in this matter as you are Chairman of one of these Committees, but nine-tenths of the various Local Government Councils do not know the Act. I was not interested in Local Government, but I heard at a meeting members of the Party in power say that they were going to make things better for the people, that the Old Vestry system was corrupt and they would relieve them. (Hon. M. E. COX: We said if we got into power.) The hon. member says that they said they would do these things if they got into power, but they want to meddle with too many things. The hon. senior member for the City cannot hold my philosophy; I am sorry that he is not here. He could never hold the same philosophy as I, because he is too steep in Conservatism. However, what he is running in the City Council is superior to what the members of the Government have done. They have entrenched in power all the tenets of Conservatism because they have produced in the Municipality a man who understands what they have passed even better

than they who brought it forward. I am not sitting in my own democratic rights and allowing the country to be gradually diminished and reduced in status to a position of stupidity when we can stop it.
4.05 p.m.

Today, we had a classic example of the Premier in introducing a Bill like this speaking about this as if he had been to some fairy land and was told something by the fairies about this Bill, and has now come back to tell us about this Bill, and that the Addendum says that this is to correct something. What is this to correct? This is not to change the rates, because the rates remain. He does not know what he is talking about. The fundamental thing is that this is based on valuation and the rates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the hon. junior member for St. James did not know is that the old time Vestry parish pump politics which existed in the past could not keep pace with what is taking place today. The Local Government situation has changed. Instead of valuing property now just as Sir John Maude said, on the old acreage basis which was anachronistic in an age like this, you have put it on values. As the hon. senior member for the City has pointed out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if a man in Tent Bay in your constituency lives in an 18' x 12' and the value of the house in 1939 was \$100, \$200, \$300 or \$400, and you exempted him from taxation, today the value of that house is \$1,000; so you can go to the Housing Authority and take your own example. You lend a man \$1,600 as a maximum at the Housing Authority, maybe to build a 16' x 9' house or one big one-roof house; that man living in that type of house 20 years ago was exempted from tax. He is not the man to tax today, because the value of his property is like the value of anything you wear today. A pair of shoes today will cost more than a pair of shoes twenty years ago, but it covers the same ten toes; therefore what it is doing is the same. A man is getting the same shelter, Mr. Deputy Speaker; so when you value his house and ask him to pay taxes when he should be exempted from doing so, you are putting him back where he started.

The other aspect of this question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not only the incident of taxation but how heavily it is going to fall on those most able to bear it. In the past, all land was valued, but now you say only certain arable land and rab land; therefore, it means that you have cut off valuation on some land. If you take an analysis of land owners in Barbados, you will find that it is divided between the big owners. Small people in Barbados do not own land. The small land owner in Barbados is like the proverbial mosquito on the rump of a rhinoceros.

I do not think I was in this Chamber when you debated the Resolution for \$331,000; I happened to have left the island, but while on that, I am going to take this opportunity to say what I would have said then. When you came with this Resolution for \$331,000 to give relief to people who normally would not qualify in any context for exemption, it would be a question of having this money to run the country and therefore who must pay it. Obviously they must pay it; but what do you find? The Premier introduces this today not to correct that because it remains. The valuation remains. If you want to remove that, you have to remove the cause.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had a discussion this morning in other quarters with the Minister of Trade in connection with money, and if we in perpetuum have to look for \$331,000, in the next ten years we will see \$3 million coming out of our revenue. We did not have to look for that before, so why must we look for it now to run the Local Government without any question of reappraisal of the situation?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard that some of the businessmen in Barbados are asking Government to increase the rate of interest. Whenever you hear a man with money asking for the rate of interest to be increased, it is not that he is at the borrowing end. A man who is at the borrowing end of money never wants the rate increased; it is the man at the lending end who asks for the rate of interest to be raised. If they have reached the stage in Barbados where they have so much money to lend, it means therefore that they are a little more prosperous after a better distribution of the

income in a better system and a more progressive system of taxation. It means too that people in that position are not in need of relief like the man in an 18' x 10' or the man renting a small bit of land.

I agree with those speakers who said that the Government's task therefore is not that of wanting to know from the City Council the people whom they relieve. If the Local Councils are bodies elected on adult franchise, you should be prepared to give them a subvention, and the checks and balances by the Legislature should protect you against the type of extravagance which you are likely to foresee. For example, in this Act the Governor-in-Executive Committee has power and authority to look at the rates and to acquire all the information it requires to determine whether these Local Government Authorities are acting wisely. Now I will go further and say that from all that went on between the Government and the City Council, it is patent that a constitutional issue arose in Barbados on the basis of whom you were going to appoint as Aldermen. The whole issue started on the fact that the Government in power was not prepared to accept, or did not accept, what would have arisen in the City in so far as the hon. senior member for the City and his group were concerned. They must not be surprised, because this is part of the Government's own creation. They created an excellent climate for that and they are creating more despite the recent election. It is true that you had no real opposition in dealing with that in my own constituency, and if I were interested in Local Government, the Labour Party could not have won the seat it won in the Northern constituency based on this same type of thing. Many people came to me on this issue. We do not want anyone to regard this as a vote of confidence, because you can be fooled by one election into another when certain fundamental issues are still outstanding.
4.15 p.m.

It is beyond doubt that the majority of taxpayers throughout the island were somewhat incensed about this system. And they had to be. Why? They were called upon to pay higher taxes. This is what the Government has not explained and I believe the City Council has not explained it either or any Council. The old Vestry ran a system which did not require a subvention from the Government. The Local Government has been called upon to run the same services; no additional services have been added; Government has not given them schools to run or the administration of the Fire Brigade. I will say that in Barbados the City Council is performing the duties of a Borough Council. It has been raised to the status of a Municipality but it does not perform the duties of a Municipality. There is no Municipality of which I have knowledge which performs such little duties as the Municipality of Bridgetown. Our Municipality is a glorified tax relief Committee or a glorified sub-Committee of the Governor-in-Executive Committee.

What is the most dangerous thing about this today, to those of us who have read of how Governments are constructed, is to find that you create elections to bodies and they put to those bodies no functions at all to perform. We are getting away from the Colonial system. Just as we did not like the idea of the Colonial Secretary saying to us who must come in here or who must go in the Other Place, we do not like this. Personally, I think we have reached the stage where Mr. McLeod or anybody who lives in England should not be able to tell us how to live in Barbados.

I say to the Government that if you have reached the stage that you agree that there should be Local Government, then take your place. Let Local Government take its place. Have your law, have your framework of the way in which you would like members of Local Government to run the system. I want to see the Premier of Barbados with full powers because I want to say to him, if he is not acting in the best interest of the country, that he is no good; retire; go home. I have a similar feeling as regards the other Ministers. Formulate your policy; but when you come to Local Government, do not let this expensive setup be just a facade of democracy. You send people to the polls to vote for Councillors and yet you are not giving them the right to administer their functions.

Sir, I do not agree with this Section. The Executive Committee, according to this, will be Ministers of this.

Surely no Minister should want to know to whom you are giving relief. What you want to say, is that you are going to give relief to a taxpayer who has a property of a certain valuation and you can put that in the Act. This is like the £5 bond which we had here, and the Hon. Minister of Trade knows that we had our differences about that.

If you are satisfied that there are certain hereditaments that should be relieved, state the value under the present circumstances to which you are prepared to give relief. We have to do our homework. If you were relieving a man whose property was of \$1,000 valuation, 25 years ago, if that value is the equivalent to \$1,500 today and you want to relieve that same type of person, you will have to increase your valuation for relief to \$1,500 so as to put them in the same position. The fines which are imposed by Magistrates in the Courts today are imposed on that same line.

I do not subscribe to the idea that the laying of rates is a very difficult job. The Government wants a simple method of laying rates. They want a simple method of valuation for land for the whole island. Of course, the majority of trade is carried on in the municipal area, although there is some movement of trade in the other parts of the island. If the City Council had asked for a subvention, I feel that both the Government and the City Council should have been taken in Carlisle Bay and drowned. The City of Bridgetown along with the corporate area of St. Michael is rich enough to carry its own. That is why I say that what the Hon. Premier said about valuation when they were holding these meetings was not true. I read something which he said in Queen's Park about valuation but, as we know, making speeches is not part of the Premier's makeup; he is not blessed with that gift to make a speech, and more so, a sensible one. Therefore, when he said something of taxation of the whole island, it is not like income tax.

What you are running now in Barbados is not like the old Vestry system; Local Government is divided into three districts and each district carries its own taxation. It is not like the Government collecting income tax to spend on the whole island. Manhattan is the richest place in the U.S.A. and in the whole world for that matter, yet it is not a big place; it is just a small part of New York. The whole of the United States of America can be absorbed into Texas but when you want money, you do not go to Texas, you go to Wall Street. It is the same thing here. The money which the Central Government gets from income tax in St. Michael can be spread to cover everybody in the island but, unfortunately, with Local Government, you cannot carry the money which you receive from Local Government taxation in St. Michael to relieve the people in St. James or the Northern District Council. Why we cannot do that is because the Act says that it is a local area and your taxation is based on the expenditure for the area. Because of that, the Government must have a different fiscal policy. Do not fool people that you can have a shopkeeper in Bawdens, St. Andrew, paying the same rate as a shopkeeper in the City because, in St. Andrew, the taxation is based on what the people in St. Andrew want, what the people in the Northern District Council want. This is not vouchsafed to the gentlemen of the City Council.

What I think the Government should think of doing is to give the three Councils the right to prepare parks and keep them in order so that a stretch of land like that in the Bathsheba area which looks so ragged, not in keeping with the aesthetic beauty of that part of the countryside, could be beautified. Do not wait until tourists come here, for the Tourist Board to tell you what you should do for the tourists but which you have not done for the people of Barbados. 4.25 p.m.

The majority of members of the Local Government have not got any work to do; they are walking about at Alms-houses; some of them are getting fresh with the Nurses and they are carrying their freshness too far. You put these men on a Committee so as to increase the travelling allowance and when you are finished, you are taking a sledgehammer to kill an ant. I should like to say that more money is distributed by the Old Age Pension Officers than what some of these people distribute. You cannot centralise these things; if you centralise these things, the Ministers are not seeing

about them. It is the little boys in the office. As to the things which come out from the Secretary of State for the Colonies in these despatches, when you go to London, Barbados comes out on a piece of paper and somebody says that he is dealing with Barbados. Sometimes you see a small fry who is handling Barbados. The Colonial system has broken down and some people who went to London would believe that they went to the right hand of God. (ASIDES) It is their generation which has started the trouble in Africa. What happened with that generation is that they came back here and fitted into all this thing too easily instead of rebelling against it. They fitted into it like granite in sand and then you cannot see the granite. It is not a question of more centralisation. You have already centralised the carrying on of these things; in Barbados, small as it is, a place with 756 square miles of road in an area of 166 square miles, it is so easy to centralise all the services.

We have centralised education, and water too for practical purposes. I do not think we should centralise the sanitary services in St. Andrew. You must give people something to do; you must have your system but you must not make it so expensive. Some people serve on certain Boards in this island and they serve without payment. What I do feel is this: when you have the law still remaining as it is - I heard the Minister of Trade say or rather I saw a report in the newspaper, because I do not attend these meetings for the reason that people say things and you cannot reply to them and rather than break the law it is better for you to keep quiet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel that in these matters when you have the law where you can make it possible that you will be giving relief and you have to look and see that you do not give relief to these people who are not eligible for relief, then the Act should be so dealt with that you do not have that problem. In connection with Income tax you do not get that trouble; that is why I like Income Tax. The matter of giving a man relief would have to be based on his extraneous circumstances.

Taxation is a part of our civilisation. We cannot live in a civilised community without paying taxation, and therefore taxation falls on the people who have property. You allocate the money for doing things. I believe that members of the Government would like to devise a means of saying what the rates should be. Let us say that you will put a valuation on land. Land in St. Michael has a different valuation from land in Bawdens in St. Andrew. Land in Broad Street has a different valuation from land in other parts of the island. In the Trade Union we do not ask for any concessions. We are like the Church; we try to help people and we do not work for any profit, but the amount of taxation we pay is nearly \$500 a year. I do feel that if you own property and you are a part of the community in which you are existing, you should pay your taxes. I do not believe that this thing was done by the Councils with any knowledge of helping anybody, but in the Resolution which we passed this is what was stated in the Addendum:-

"The Northern and the Southern District Councils have submitted petitions to the Governor-in-Executive Committee for grants to reduce their rates in order to relieve the taxpayers of their respective Council areas. Under the provisions of Section 199(2) of the Local Government Act, 1958, grants may be made to a Council out of moneys provided by the Legislature of such sums as the Governor-in-Executive Committee may determine in aid of rates and taxes and the amounts of any such contributions shall be taken into account by the Council in determining the amount per dollar of any rate or trade tax to be made by the Council.

It is proposed that grants of \$121,337 and \$210,203 be made to the Northern and Southern District Councils respectively to enable the respective rates to be fixed at 26.73 and 18.77 cents in the dollar. Without these grants the effective rates would have to be 33 and 26.6 cents in the dollar respectively." 4.35 p.m.

As some members said, this appeared in the newspaper before it had taken place; and, as I said, with a Party

system of Government you get this, so it was known that this was coming. We are saying that you took \$331,540 out of the Public Treasury to reduce the rates for people who owned property. Did you get a tax relief from these people to know what was the situation? I understand that in many instances the bigger plantation owners and companies were paying less taxes in that year that you came down for this than in the preceding year, but the Government passed the Bill. The hon. junior member for St. James said that the Bill should be torn up, and I would like to see members of the Government come and run against me in a constituency and say that in sending down this Bill they did not know that they were going to relieve the biggest plantations or the biggest shippers and traders in Barbados at the expense of the poor man.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government say that they reflect the aspirations of the working-class man in Barbados. They should, because the working-class man put the members in the Government there. Had it not been for the working-class man's support, this House would be composed of different people even in 1960. I am one of those practical people; I take an empirical view of certain aspects of my political life, and though they claim that we will all dwell together in unity, in Barbados, when people go to the polls, they vote for people they like. I know that had it not been for the removal of the franchise, I would not have been here; and even people who tell me that they like me, like me because I am here; but if I was not here, they would not vote to send me here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look and see that you are relieving not the ones who sent you here, but that you are passing a law to make it possible for people who do not want relief to get relief, that is where I say - and I have a public duty to carry out - that the Premier must understand that in dealing with legislation of a country, he is not dealing with legislation of a Party; it is not a pious organisation or a debating society where it does not matter. I feel quite strongly that if the Premier knew more about what was going on in the world and what we required in Barbados, you would not get this spectacle. It is pathetic that in introducing the measure the Premier does not even understand what has taken place. It is true that the hon. senior member for the City is not here, but I take his encomiums as they should be taken. I have never seen a better spectacle in this House on one side and on the other. The hon. senior member for the City says in one breath what a nice man the Premier is, and in another breath you get statements to the opposite.

The hon. senior member for the City has posed as an authority on Local Government. I do not pretend, Sir, to be an authority on Local Government, but what I do know is that this Bill as it now stands, and this amendment as it stands, are going to open the door to an aspect of political life that we are not accustomed to in Barbados. I would ask what the Government foresees that it must make this relief. What has the District Councils said to you for you to make this relief? The City Council has not asked for relief, so why ask for relief for the Northern and Southern District Councils? What is wrong with their rating system? What is wrong with their valuation system? What happened in the past? Those are things we have not heard from the Government.

You would be surprised to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Government in power had the effrontery to get on a public platform and defend themselves, that what they passed was O.K. and there need be no worry about it. The taxes did not have to be so high because they carried up the valuation, and therefore the amount of money that they had to tax, Government got through that forgetting this one aspect; if all the things we had to tax were these microphones in here, and all the money we required remained static, that is to say, if we want \$1,000 from these microphones and there are ten microphones valued at \$10 each and therefore that came to \$1,000, we need not have taxed any more to get the same \$1,000. If we saw that we wanted \$3,000 instead of \$1,000 and they were carrying the valuation on the microphones from \$10 to \$11, it is going to give the same \$3,000 by allowing the percentage to remain.

That is ordinary arithmetic and there is nothing involved about that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, figures and statements like these do not seem to appeal to the Premier. We would like to know how much money there is involved in Local Government, what the Northern District Council rated for last year, what the Southern District Council rated for last year, what the City Council required and what the expenditure is to cover. That is the sort of information one wants to get. What is the type of valuation you are working on and why is it that these Vestries now require more money? It is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Northern District Council has bought a number of vehicles, and I think I saw you, Sir, receiving at an official function some sewerage vehicles. With a capital item like that, the Council should have authority to borrow the money and over a period of time amortize the debt. That is sensible financing. I have no idea of the cost of these vehicles and I think that they got three of them. I do not know if they cost \$100,000. 4.45 p.m.

I understand that that would cost about \$20,000. What we would like to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is why is it that the first year after Local Government was brought into being, when we all felt that Local Government was going to make us happier, we had to give them a subvention of over \$300,000? What is the Bill going to be like this year? It does not matter who gets this subvention; what matters is, why it has to be this way. What I would like to see is the Central Government providing subventions to the Local Government for capital purposes, for things which you know that they cannot do of themselves.

Sir, I have my own views about taxation of Government properties. I would say that it is a question of how high is your taxation. This is where you must have a proper analysis. If the Government ever acquires so much of the Local Government taxable property, then it is likely to throw an undue burden on the other taxpayers that remain. Should that arise, the Government would have to examine the question for relief in that particular area. But that is just a matter of information; I do not think that situation has arisen in St. Michael. I would tell you why I believe that situation has not arisen yet. The Government has confined itself to going into certain areas and finding places where they can house the people. But what do you find? Because St. Michael is a built up and capital area, more of the businesses in trade are created in St. Michael than in any other constituency. Your constituency and mine are still mainly agricultural and fishing areas. If more business were to come your way - I mean in your constituency - the whole incidence of taxation would change. However, if the Government takes up too much land and property from the Local Government areas, you will have to watch that because the property owners remaining would have to pay a proportionate tax which would be out of keeping with what you are doing for the whole community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will say this to my colleagues. It has happened in England with the Labour Party there. There is one sure thing, you can tax people; but whenever the taxes hit them hard, you have to do something about it. I knew the Government would have to do something about the taxes which the people were called upon to pay on the last occasion. Why? If the sources that put you in power ever become so irritated by anything which you do and you remain adamant to their wishes, you know where you would be eventually. I had no doubt that the Government had to do something about this taxation. If the Government did not do anything about it, if the Government did not say that they were going to look into this question, well, you know where they would be at the next election. If you want to get an electorate infuriated, make the people pay more for the things for which they feel they should not pay more.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know as well as I do that all politicians say "we are going to make your lot better." If you go to the St. Joseph area or to the Northern District area and you say to the people that by Local Government legislation it is Government's intention to spread the taxation over the community, it is not a slander if you say that

it is not to soak the poor but to soak the rich and help the poor.

I do not know what you are going to say about this situation in which the hon. senior member for St. George on my immediate left was the recipient of tax relief. That is one of the biggest conundrums I have ever seen in my whole life. Just fancy, a man of his category, a shareholder in the Barbados Shipping and Trading Company and a man of Mr. Julian Mahon's stature from Lion Castle, St. Thomas, have been granted tax relief!

Mr. DOWDING: Sir, may I speak on a point of personal explanation. I have no shares in the Barbados Shipping and Trading Company.

Mr. WALCOTT: I did not say that he had shares in the Barbados Shipping and Trading Company. I said that the hon. member has reached the impecunious stage where he was the recipient of tax relief from the Local Government system. He became a recipient of tax relief through an Act which was passed by a Socialist Government. If that is so, then we have to bow our heads in shame. Just fancy people like the hon. senior member for St. George becoming recipients of tax relief. Unheard of! The Hon. Minister says that he is going to correct this error; I am saying the hon. member is an error unto himself. I say that this is no error; it was a deliberate act of stupidity. It was plain as a pikestaff. We were in here nights and nights when we discussed that Clause.

What has it done? I will only say that as long as we know ourselves the hon. senior member for the City would always be in a very favourable position. As long as he lives with this sort of thing going on, he will always be in a very favourable position. In St. Michael where you have so many owners of houses, do you think that you are going to take it out of the people's minds that he said that they were the people whom you were taxing? I remember an occasion where a man with a breadcart came to me and showed me his taxbill and said to me: "Mr. Walcott, what are you doing with me? Look here, I have to pay \$28 in taxes."

Sir, I do not know how some of these people ever were able to own a house. It would take an economist to work out the average earnings of these people, and he would not be able to find out how they could ever own a house. I do not know—unless they own it by getting up early and grazing their cows and sheep on the hedgerows and probably by the cows getting a little sip of the mash which the plantation owner has given out for the cows on his plantation. The average man in Barbados gets \$13 a week. Do you realise that if he has to pay a tax of \$13 at one time he would have to go and borrow money? I will go further and say this: some of the people who do not own houses and are living in some of the houses rented by the Government, which houses are exempted from taxation, are better off than some of the people who by their own sweat have put by something to purchase a little house for which they have to pay taxes.

4.55 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know that there are some people who own little 18x10 houses, houses which are taxable, but they do not work steadily every week of the year; they do some jobs and try to help themselves. I feel that this Bill does not go to the root of the trouble. Whom are you going to relieve? Why should the Governor-in-Executive Committee, which is the Ministers, want to do the job of relieving these people and who are the people whom you want to relieve? Why do you not think that the people who have been elected by the Councils are capable of doing this job? I can say quite safely that if the hon. senior member for the City were not the Mayor of Bridgetown and so the head of the City Council, I doubt very much that we would have had the trouble in this island which we have had in Local Government.

I am asking the members of the Government to bear in mind that we came through the road when we were resisted. If those who were in power had reacted to the other members like how the Government want to react to the members

who are now in here, there would have been another Turkey. What is happening in the Congo is the result of the stupid resistance to change.

They see that the hon. senior member for the City has been elected, but they want to put things in his way and persecute him. I say this: if a man is doing a good job, say he is doing a good job whether he is your friend or your foe. The people who are resisting change are those who will suffer. I have absolutely no sympathy whatsoever for the Belgians because they are resisting change, and that is what you get for resisting change; they bite off your toe or cut off your foot. That is what you get for resisting change. It is time that this Government.....

At this stage, Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

Mr. WALCOTT: I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that it is time that the members of this Government realise that if an opponent is elected they should accept him as having been elected through the democratic channels. Every hon. member of this House is not a member of a Local Government Council, and the members of the Government must realise that they cannot run the City Council and the Government too, as they want to do. They cannot have it in both ways; there are two separate and distinct functions. Not one member who has been elected as a representative of a constituency can say that he has not been approached and asked what he is going to do about this matter, about these tax bills. The most alarming thing is to hear a Councillor say that he did not know what it is all about. Well, Sir, that is not good enough; the hon. junior member for St. James says that he was exasperated. When he could not find what an answer was, he said that this Bill should be torn up.

Mr. SEARLES: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I never used any such words.

Mr. WALCOTT: I said that he was so exasperated that he said that Bill should be torn up. Well, his colleagues should say that they will not take him seriously when he gets up to speak. I did not say that the hon. member said that he was exasperated; I said that he was exasperated, when he could not find what an answer was. That is an indication to show that, as a member of the Council, he was totally unaware of what he had to do; he found that he had to do something of which he knew nothing, and therefore he said that the whole thing wants tearing up.

Mr. SEARLES: Again, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want the hon. member to realise that I am not a fool and by his remarks he is inferring that I am a fool.

Mr. WALCOTT: Sometimes a fool confirms remarks about himself when he speaks! (Laughter). I have respect for old age and therefore I will not say anything more than what I have said. I said that many members of the Government Party, other than the hon. junior member for St. James, have been unaware of the implications of the Local Government Bill, and when it came out that this system produced this type of taxation, they did not know what to do. That is why the only recourse which they had was to go to the Government and the Government advised that they could not do anything from Government House or from the Cabinet; but if a request came to them from the Councils asking for relief, then they would give that relief. Any member of the Government can challenge that statement; it is as true as John 3.16. If you find that one of your members is drowning you should throw out the line, unless they are going to do like last night when they did not throw out the line. But, of course, if the case is too far gone, there is no point in throwing out the line; you do not have to worry.

In all societies, and in the best of families, you always have people for whom you leave room open when they are shaky because you do not know which way they will go up. If the hon. junior member for St. James is annoyed about the remark I made, I made it because the hon. member is the only member of his colleagues in Local Government whom I can see. I do not put His Honour the Deputy Speaker in to this matter but I have my firm con-

victions about some of these things; and that is why some of the members of the Government could say certain things. 5.05 p.m.

I feel that officers like the Speaker and Deputy Speaker should not be engaged in these Local Government Authorities, just as I feel that the Speaker should not be the Mayor. I think we will evolve to that at some stage where we will draw the line between Local Government elections and the people who are eligible for taking a seat here and those who are ineligible. That will come with more maturity.

In my view, Sir, this Bill is likely to lead to more serious complications. The best thing to do is to go to the root and amend the Bill at its source which gives the people with hereditaments the right of exemption.

Hon. L. St. A. THORNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that further consideration of this Bill be postponed.

Mr. SEARLES rose to second the motion.

Mr. TUDOR: I beg to second that.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want to make it straight that the voice of the hon. senior member for St. Lucy was heard and not the hon. junior member for St. James, so on the record the hon. senior member for St. Lucy will appear as having seconded the motion.

The question that further consideration of this Bill be postponed was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Thursday, 25th August. (A VOICE: Why not Tuesday?) Business before pleasure. Had it not been for the fact that members of the House are invited, I could not care less about the party.

Mr. WALCOTT: The boys are not idlers; they have to work otherwise to justify their bosses.

Hon. M. E. COX: If it is more convenient to members, Sir, I say at 3 o'clock on Thursday.

Mr. WALCOTT: Tuesday.

Hon. D. D. GARNER: We have a lot of work to do.

Mr. WALCOTT: Who is moving the adjournment? We are not moving the adjournment.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Thursday, 25th August at 12 noon.

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

Mr. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, the reason why I would suggest an amendment to that motion to read next Tuesday is for the simple reason that Government should not try to fit the business of the House only to their convenience. It is not a question that members have been invited to a party by the Government and the Hon. Minister of Education. It is a fact that you are not going to meet after now because it is a Government function. You are adjourning now to go to the Government function. I am not going to it, with all due respect to the Minister of Education who knows my views. It is not a question of telling us to come back here on Thursday as if to show somebody that we are living in the House of Assembly. I want to make it clear that a member is not elected to the House of Assembly because he is an idler; he is elected because he is a person in the community who has something to do. Nobody expects you to come here every day to show that you are representing them.

The Minister knows that this morning at 9.30 p.m., I was in his office. Last week, I was at Government Head-

quarters twice, apart from coming to the meetings of the House of Assembly. I had a meeting this afternoon although I am on holiday which I had to forego to come to this meeting of the House. I do not want the Minister to feel that we are idlers and have no work to do. I heard the Minister say that they have work to do. We too have business to do. There are certain Bills on the Order Paper which members must have time to read. The hon. members of the Government have advisers, but the ordinary member has to be his own Permanent Secretary; so Government has to be considerate. There is this stupid arrangement in the House of Assembly where we meet every week. I have suggested having a Session of meetings but they have resisted that, and are meeting Tuesday after Tuesday. You meet for the whole year, week after week with things held over your head like the sword of Damocles.

You, Mr. Speaker, have things to do which you cannot do if the House meets week after week; so I make that appeal to the Leader, and I would humbly move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday next at 12 noon.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree with the hon. senior member for St. Peter that members of the House are not elected because they are idlers. If he restricted his remarks to the members of the Opposition, I would entirely agree with him, but I enjoin every member of the House to go home tonight and write out the occupations of the members of the Government Party before they became Ministers, before they came into this House, and see what result they arrive at. No more to be said on that.

I want to draw to Your Honour's attention that it is not a question of begging them to do something. As long as they have a majority, they can exercise that majority indiscriminately if they want to do it; but I must draw to Your Honour's attention that we were brought back here for two consecutive Thursdays in two consecutive weeks. There are ten items on the Order Paper under Government Business and there are sixteen items under Private Members' Business. The sixteen items under Private Members' Business, one of which is a vote of "no confidence" in a Government Minister, were given up and foregone by the Leader of the Opposition in order to facilitate the Government in its work today. On the two consecutive Thursdays that we were brought back here, there was not one single item of Government Business which could be described as a matter of pressing urgency or priority. 5.15 p.m.

Let us take the Bill which was given notice of today to impose a duty on motor cars. The Hon. Premier is introducing this Bill five months after he said he was going to do it; and we are now called upon to consider it in a week. He waited five months to bring it in although he promised to bring in the necessary legislation within seven days of the Budget Speech.

Apart from that, there is no single item of Government Business which is of an urgent nature. Order No. 1, which we have been discussing all day and over which question we gave up our right to discuss Private Members' Business is a Bill to amend the Local Government Act, 1958. I think that Order No. 2, which is the second reading of a Bill to amend the Stamp Act, 1916, has something to do in relation to the Budget Speech of an increase in Stamp duty to four cents instead of two cents. Order No. 3, is to resume Committee on a Bill to amend the Fishing Industry Act, 1952. We were in the middle of that debate at the moment of interruption on the 9th August, last. A similar thing has happened to Order No. 4, which is a Bill to regulate the holding of land by aliens and companies under alien control. Barbados has not sunk in the Atlantic Ocean and will not sink if this Bill is not considered. Then Order No. 5 is complementary to Order No. 4 - second reading of a Bill to amend the Companies Act, 1910. Order No. 6 is a Bill to impose a duty on bets made by way of pool betting. That Bill is going to take a long time. You can go ahead in that way to the end of Government Business at Order No. 10.

After summoning the House here last Thursday, the House had to adjourn early because the Government had no pressing business. The Government is not bringing down any pressing business. What the Government is bringing down is nonsensical legislation because it has nothing else to do. As the hon. senior member for St. Peter has said, there are members of this Chamber who are gainfully employed, who have to do their business, but whether Ministers come to the House or not, they are going to draw their salaries; therefore, it is only a question of whether they be in the Ministerial Buildings or in this House of Assembly.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has not seconded the motion.

Mr. BARROW: Not yet, Sir, but I am still on my feet. The position is that there are sixteen items of Private Members' Business and ten items of Government Business on the Order Paper. On the last occasion when we reached the moment of interruption, we had petered out, so to speak; so if the Hon. Minister feels that they are doing something, we will make personal decisions where it is in the interest of us and our constituents.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, ...

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has not seconded the amended motion.

Mr. BARROW: I really rose to second the motion of the hon. senior member for St. Peter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, the hon. member did not do so.

Mr. BARROW: I do so now. It was really an oversight on my part because of some conversation which was going on around me.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I really cannot see how the hon. junior member for St. John can second the motion now. He had already sat down when Your Honour drew it to his attention that the motion was not seconded.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thought it was really the hon. member's intention to do so, so I drew it to his attention. The hon. member then rose and seconded the motion.

Hon. M. E. COX: The hon. member sat down; therefore, he loses the opportunity to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: He had a moral right to do so before he sat.

Hon. M. E. COX: However, Sir, I would like to say this. It is now about four weeks since I have discussed the question of the House going into recess with the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. I think we actually agreed about it. As a matter of fact, I told him that we will meet more regularly in order to get rid of some of the items on the Order Paper so that the House could go into recess for the whole of September.

The position is that the Government has certain items which it wants passed within a certain time before the House goes into recess. That is the reason why I have made the motion to adjourn until Thursday.

Hon. members are within their right to come here and speak as long as they like. Unlike other places of Parliament, where members are confined to a half-hour speech or so, there is nothing of the sort in here; and a member can speak as long as he likes. But surely, it is not fair for members who are in the minority to filibuster Bills brought down by the Government and then expect the Government to agree to any long adjournment which does not give the Government the opportunity to pass the legislation which it has in mind to pass.

Another point. The hon. member who has just left the Chamber is like the wicked fleeth where no man pursueth!

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. Minister is speaking on the motion for the adjournment. Please keep your speech within that bound. Do not be personal.

Hon. M. E. COX: I cannot understand how the hon. junior member for St. John can say that we come down with all these nonsensical motions or Resolutions, yet out of all these nonsensical Resolutions, individuals can find as much in them as to justify them making a speech for two or three hours. That does not really make sense. When you can speak at that length on something which you consider nonsensical, then you are more nonsensical.

I would like to say that it is the Government in the last analysis which is responsible to the people; and it is the Government's duty to see that legislation which is brought here is passed within a reasonable time. Members can speak as long as they like, and as they like; therefore, it is the duty of the Government to adjourn the House at a time suitable in order for them to carry out their pledges to the people. I do not think we are doing anything undemocratic. If there is a motion or a Bill which is before the House which in normal circumstances could be passed within an hour, and which we had hoped to pass in that time, but on which members had cared to speak eight or ten hours, everyone of them speaking although they claim that they are a Party - we feel that we are justified in moving the adjournment to a time which we feel is reasonable to get Government Business through. I am not going to withdraw my motion. I am bringing that motion to a vote.
5.25 p.m.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Speaker, in seconding the motion of the hon. senior member for St. Peter which I now do, for the adjournment until Tuesday of next week, I do so because it is reasonable, having regard to the fact that Tuesday is the recognised Parliamentary day in this island for us to make an adjournment. We adjourn from Tuesday to Tuesday except in cases of grave emergency, or when the Colonial Estimates are being considered. Private Members and members of the Executive Committee do not make arrangements for other days during the week when the Estimates are being discussed, because at that time, from time immemorial we are expected to meet on two or three days of the week.

When it comes to the month of August, which was expected to be the month for the Summer recess, as it has always been with the Mother of Parliaments, we did not anticipate that we would have had to meet at all. But because of a bottleneck in the Attorney General's Chambers in Bills not being produced but which have found their way on the Order Paper now, we are meeting this month so as to complete what the Government regard as Government Business in order that we may have the month of September as our parliamentary recess. It is as essential for Parliament, as it is for doctors, lawyers, trade unionists and other officials, to have a recess in order that members can return to their work refreshed and reinvigorated. I am sure that there is no medical practitioner in this House or even outside, who would disagree with having a recess or an annual holiday, and who would not recommend to its patients such an annual respite. As it was impossible for such a holiday to take place in this month of August because of the bottleneck in the production of Bills, we had anticipated that September would have been substituted and we would revert to August as from next year and subsequently as the month for our Summer recess.

I quite agree with the Hon. Leader of the House that we have had a word with each other about completing what they regard as a most urgent item on the Order Paper so that we may adjourn for the month of September; but I suggest to him that, in the spirit of compromise which so often prevails with him, but, unfortunately, not so often with his colleagues, we should sit all through on Tuesday with the understanding that September may be free and we may meet again on Wednesday. But we have met during the month of August so that all urgent matters would have been done before September so that the Summer recess

would come into operation from September. It should be borne in mind that when hon. members are not accustomed, particularly in the month of August, to meeting more often than once a week, if we meet at all, they are expected to have arranged their work so as to be able to come to the House; but not two or three times in one week in August. That is unreasonable. I do not know why the motion has not been made for the adjournment until 3 o'clock p.m. on Thursday instead of 12 o'clock noon because that is the lesser of two evils.

Mr. Speaker, all of us have to work for a living; even the hon. senior member for St. George has to work for his living. (Mr. DOWDING: I work harder than you.) We, not having planned to be at the House from 12 o'clock on Thursday, would find it difficult to be present in the House at that day. If we meet on Tuesday and give an undertaking that we will carry on, we should be able to clear the Order Paper.

I must remind the Hon. Leader of the House that in respect of this particular Bill which has been before us today, there is only one member who has spoken on behalf of the Official Opposition. We have studiously avoided making any contribution because we have been trying to ensure that the point of view of the Opposition should be put forward by that member who has that portfolio in the Shadow Cabinet, or who is acting for another member on our side who is not present and who has delegated that particular matter to another colleague of his. The honourable and gallant junior member for St. John deals with Local Government affairs; and there is the hon. senior member for St. Philip who has not been able to join us today through illness. I hope that the Hon. Leader of the House will agree with us that it creates a great personal hardship and inconvenience to us to meet unexpectedly on a second day in a week when we did not even expect to meet even on one day. We will plan to come back here on Tuesday of next week and on Wednesday, if there is any business which has not been finished on Tuesday, to deal with that business which the Government feels necessary to be completed before the recess takes place.

Mr. DOWDING: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the motion which has been made by the hon. senior member for St. Peter and seconded by the hon. and learned junior member for St. Lucy. In doing so, I want to refute the allegation which the Hon. Leader of the House has tried to make in laying the blame at the door of the members of the Opposition for speaking at length on every occasion (Hon. M. E. COX: I said filibustering.) Well, Sir, he used the word filibustering; let us see who is filibustering. A couple of months ago the Order Paper was cleared; that is a fact; so much so, the Hon. Leader of the House himself, when he suggested recessing the House for two weeks and some other hon. member said that there should be a recess of four weeks, he was willing to take three weeks and that was what finally happened. 5.35 p.m.

On this occasion you should be willing, Private Members' Business having been given up, to meet us half way due to the fact that on the Order Paper the earliest item dates from the 12th July, only a matter of weeks ago. The point I want to make absolutely clear to the public is that which the Hon. Leader of the Opposition made. You come find that Orders Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are postponed. Why are these things postponed when there is so little on the

Order Paper? We come here, Sir, willing to work but there is postponement after postponement of Orders. The Order Paper only consists of ten items for the Government and the earliest item is the 12th July.

Now, Sir, from these facts can any blame be laid on the Opposition for speaking at length? The blame lies in the fact that the Government is unable to get its business to the House in time for it to be dealt with when it should be dealt with; otherwise there would have been no opportunity when the hon. member wanted two weeks to take three weeks instead. If he had his business in order at that time, we would have been able to get ahead with it, but now we are being brought back.... (Hon. D. D. GARNER: You sound so foolish!) You had better join the Rastafarian Movement.

Hon. D. D. GARNER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Did I hear the hon. member say something about the Rastafarians? I hope he did not say anything disrespectful or derogatory about them. I did not hear what he said, but there is also something about South Africans and Boers. You had better be careful how you are talking! Do not make sport about Africa.

Mr. DOWDING: Mr. Speaker, I should never think of making sport about Africa; the hon. member is the person that makes sport about Africa.

Anyhow, Sir, those are the actual facts which can be seen from the Order Paper of this Honourable House. It is something which the Hon. Leader of this House should realise and not always lay the blame on the Opposition. I admit that there are times when the Opposition is in a mood to hold the Government back, but on this occasion, Sir, the reason for holding back is the fact that the Hon. Leader of the House has not seen fit to make a reasonable compromise in the fact that Government Business is not forwarded to this House fast enough for it to be dealt with. Those are the facts of the case, and those are the reasons why in spite of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, I am going to support the motion made by the hon. senior member for St. Peter and seconded by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The question that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 30th August at 12 noon, was put and resolved in the negative, the House dividing as follows:-

AYES: Mr. CORBIN; Mr. WALCOTT; Mr. DOWDING; Mr. TUDOR; Mr. TALMA and Mr. BRANCKER - 6.

NOES: Mr. BRYAN; Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS; Hon. M. E. COX; Hon. D. D. GARNER; Hon. R. G. MAPP; Mr. SEARLES; Hon. F. E. MILLER and Mr. SMITH - 8.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Thursday, 25th August at 12 noon was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:-

AYES: Mr. BRYAN; Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS; Hon. M. E. COX; Hon. D. D. GARNER; Hon. R. G. MAPP; Hon. F. E. MILLER; Mr. SEARLES and Mr. SMITH - 8.

NOES: Mr. CORBIN; Mr. WALCOTT; Mr. DOWDING; Mr. TUDOR; Mr. TALMA and Mr. BRANCKER - 6. 5.43 p.m.