
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1960

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, 12th February, 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*); 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. D. D. GARNER, (*Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries*); Mr. C. B. SEARLES; Mr. J. W. CORBIN; and Mr. G. E. S. STRAUGHN.

Prayers were read.

Hon. F. E. MILLER; and Mr. TUDOR and Mr. BRYAN entered the House and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th February this year have been printed and circulated among all hon. members and unless there be any objection, these Minutes will be now taken as read and confirmed.

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

PAPERS LAID

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay Statistical Service - Abstract of Statistics No. 2 - 1957.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Customs Duties (Glucose and Sodium pyrophosphate) Order, 1960.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay Post Office Advances for the payment of Money Orders to the 30th November, 1959.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Government Notices were given as follows:-

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Resolution to place the sum of \$79,774 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to supplement the Estimates, 1959-60, Part I - Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1959-60, No. 41 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of an area of land in the city of Bridge-

town for the purpose of highway improvement for the use and benefit of the public.

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 deal with the money Resolution of which notice has just been given.

QUESTIONS

Mr. TUDOR: To enquire of the Hon. Minister of Health and Social Services:- Has the Minister investigated the report that infants have been bitten by rats in the General Hospital?

2. Will the Minister state whether the report is true?
3. If true, will the Minister state whether any of these infants have died.

Mr. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, the hon. junior member for St. John has asked me on his own behalf to give notice of the following questions:- To enquire of the Hon. Minister of Communications, Works and Housing:-

1. Does the Minister for Communications and Works know that employees of the Waterworks Department have to provide their own transportation to and from work on the new Sandy Lane Road?
2. Is the Minister also aware that the cost of such transportation by bus is in the case of some workers in excess of sixty cents per day?
3. Is the Minister aware that it is the practice of the Barbados Telephone Company and the Barbados Light and Power Company to convey their employees to and from work locations?
4. Will the Government take action to ensure that employees of the three major works departments i.e. Highways and Transport, Public Works and Waterworks enjoy in future conditions of service not less favourable than those experienced by employees of the Public Utilities managed by private enterprise?

To enquire of the Hon. Premier:-

1. Will the Honourable Premier make a statement without delay as to the history of the negotiations between members of Government and a concern known as the Mitchell Engineering Company in the United Kingdom?
2. Will the Hon. Premier also state at whose expense a representative or representatives of this concern travelled to and were entertained in Barbados?
3. Will the Honourable Premier state the amounts spent, if any, by the Government either on travel and/or entertainment of representatives of the said Mitchell Engineering Company?
4. (a) Is the Government aware of negotiations for the transfer by the Barbados Electric Supply Corporation of the ordinary shares in the Barbados Light and Power Company?
(b) If the answer is in the affirmative does the Government intend to acquire any of the said shares? If not, why not?

(c) Does the Government intend to guarantee the raising of the Capital necessary to purchase the said shares from the Barbados Electric Supply Corporation? If so, why so?

(d) Does the present action of the Government in negotiating with an alleged manufacturer of Nuclear Power stations derogate in any way from guarantees given by the Government to the Barbados Light and Power Company?

I understand that it is the desire of the hon. junior member for St. John that these Questions be treated to oral answers:-

12.25 p.m.

5. Will the Honourable Premier as Minister of Finance give figures showing the purchasing power of the W.I. Dollar in Barbados from the year 1938 to the year 1959 taking the year 1938 as 100.

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order of the Day is to move the House into Committee of Supply.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that the first Order of the Day was the resumption of the debate on the Transport (Amendment) Bill. That is not so, and I am now asking leave that that Bill which is Order No. 2 be taken as the first Order of the Day.

There being no objection leave was granted the Hon. Minister.

TRANSPORT (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order of the Day is now Order No. 2 - to resume debate on the second reading of the Bill to amend the Transport Board Act, 1955.

Mr. STRAUGHN: Mr. Speaker, - Before hon. members start

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member speaking on a point of order?

Mr. STRAUGHN: I think it is a point of correction.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a point of order.

Mr. STRAUGHN: Mr. Speaker, if you look at the Order Paper you will see that it is stated there as follows: "Mr. Mottley began his speech. On motion of Mr. Brancker seconded by Mr. Tudor, further debate was postponed." I think that that should be interchanged. The motion by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition came before the hon. senior member for the City spoke. The hon. member spoke on the motion for postponement.

Mr. SPEAKER: I appreciate the hon. member's observation.

Mr. STRAUGHN: I do not know if it is a question of privilege of speaking which will arise in respect of the hon. senior member for the City.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the position is clear.

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed to be regretted that even at this very late stage, the Hon. Minister of Transport is unable to give or to state the policy relative to transport in this island. It is now some four years - close on five years - that the Government has taken over a large section of the Transport of this island and attempted to run it - and they said that it would be placed on a paying footing. They have now come again to us today with a Statement of Accounts which show a loss - such a large loss that it is a great burden on the taxpayers of this island. We were assured one year ago that with the appointment of an imported Managing Director - one for whom it was claimed that he had vast experience - and from the proposals which were made by him within a month or two of his arrival in this island, the Minister assured us that the losses would be greatly reduced this year and that he

could foresee in future years that the transport service would be put on a paying basis. At that time we did not have the proposals of the Managing Director, but it was only a few months after that we were treated to some of them, one of which was an increase in the fares charged. We were assured again that with these increased charges.....

Hon. R. G. MAPP: On a point of order. The hon. member is wrong. The increase in fares took place before the Managing Director arrived here.

Mr. GODDARD: I thank the Hon. Minister for the correction. I am wrong, but that was one of the proposals which were made for the improved efficiency and operation of this service. Yet today we are presented with a balance sheet which shows a loss over the last financial year of \$173,510.10. Over the four years since the Government has taken over the transport, it has shown a loss of \$999,387.58 - a few dollars short of a million dollars. One million dollars in four years.

12.35 p.m.

It is necessary for us to glance back four or five years ago when the Government came in here to take over the public transport, and when we were told that the concessionaires were making money and were yet asking for an increase in fares. Government had appointed two or three Commissions of their own choice to go into the findings of these transport concessionaires, and on each occasion they had reported to the Government that an increase of fares was justified; but it was private enterprise, and no matter who it was, how large or small the undertaking, they could only see public ownership prospering and they took over the buses against the advice of some of us. I was one of these. I said then that a very black picture would be painted very shortly, but I did not realise that it would have been as black as this or so soon.

I do not wish on every occasion that Government comes here with these statements of accounts or for something for the Transport Board to recapitulate what I have said more than once. They are unable under the present set up to run public transport in this island. They have brought in new buses, have paid large sums for them and they are more expensive buses than those which the private concessionaires have brought in; and look at the condition of those buses alongside of what the private enterprise has; it is a disgrace! They are being badly managed, badly handled, and the depreciation that you are allowing is but a minimum, because they are being depreciated much faster than the ones under the care of private concessionaires.

On every occasion we are also treated to the spectacle that the Government was forced to take over delapidated, old buses that were ten, twelve or fourteen years old, and for that reason vast sums of money had to be spent on their repairs, but these very old buses are still running; even after four years of use they are still operating; and as far as I can see, the expenditure on the new buses must be as great as on those old ones. The sad picture today is this: we know what has happened; we know we have lost \$1 million in four years, but the sad plight is that the Minister cannot today assure us of a better picture. He cannot tell us that in the coming year or in years to come we will catch up at a point somewhere that we can say we will have to subsidise public transport to the tune of say \$200,000 a year; and they know that they will have to find that out of taxes; but he does not want to do that. We are divided between part of the public transport of this island making money on the same fares as those that are being operated by the Government at a loss. If he were to come here with this subsidy, and if he wants to keep the cost of travelling to the public as the lowest in the West Indies - because in the Report it is said so, but it has always been the lowest in the West Indies; and when Government took over four years ago they were told then that the fares in Barbados were lower than in any other West Indian island; but for that reason and for other reasons given, they still took them over. It is not good enough to say that this loss is as a result of the lowest fares in the West Indies and the highest wages being paid at the same time. That is the comparison they are drawing;

Is it not also a fact that the private concessionaires are rendering as good as or a better service as the Government-run buses? They are making money and it is not costing the taxpayers any money to have half of the transport run by private concessionaires. It is not costing them anything but it is costing Government a sum to the tune of \$173,000 - plus for running half the buses, and I draw it to the Minister's attention.

Now in this statement of accounts, funds made available by the Government of Barbados to the Transport Board amounted to \$1,691,000. I wonder if he notes that that is free of interest; it is an advance and not one penny in interest is set aside for that advance. Now if that was put in at 5% there would be another \$75,000 loss; but as one member said, what is the use of putting it in if they cannot pay it? If they are losing, they have to try to save everything to make a presentable balance sheet. They have never over the four years paid one penny in interest; therefore you can see there is even a greater loss than what this balance sheet presents. If Government is going to advance sums of money to the tune of \$1 1/2 million without any interest charges, are they not fooling themselves or trying to fool the public that the cost of public transport in this island is not as great as it really is? If they had had that \$1 1/2 million invested somewhere else or productively employed in Barbados - which is more important - it would be earning a minimum of 5% or maybe more, and the private concessionaires would have been finding the capital to carry on public transport as efficiently or more efficiently than they are providing today. I do not know if they are yet convinced after four years of trial that we cannot go on with this lack of policy any longer.

The Minister said the Transport Board is under review at this moment; he does not know if he can say that there will be a retraction of effort, continuation of the same or a speeding up. Well, that is for policy and it should come to the House. Policy should be formulated as soon as possible so that we will know where we are going. We put in the Estimates this year the sum of \$50,000 for losses; therefore we can argue that the Government at that time felt that the losses would have been no greater than \$50,000 this year and under the improved management that we had been assured of that losses would have been no greater; but it is more than three times greater than was anticipated. It is a sad affair.

Now to come to us today and say: "Let us pass a Bill to empower the Transport Board to raise loans with the approval of the Governor-in-Executive Committee," should we not be told of what size loan they are thinking? Will it be to buy these 28 buses that we have been told about? Will it be to raise a loan to pay back the Government this advance of \$1,691,000? If so, they will then be coming for a sum in the vicinity of \$2 1/2 million.

12.45 p.m.

If we authorise that, the Transport Board will then be saddled with the expense of finding the interest for \$2 1/2 million and also a sinking fund. Add that, add 5% on \$2 1/2 million and if the operations do not improve, we will have added another \$125,000 to the already overburdened taxpayers. Then, Government will have to say that we are satisfied that we are running a service which we should subsidise, and in doing so we will have then to be subsidising those who are already running a similar service and making money. I presume that will be the case.

The arguments which we hear today from the Government side we have never heard when they were taking over the buses. We never heard from that side that the bus fares of Barbados were the lowest in the West Indies. But we heard that today. We have also heard that the conditions of employment of the Transport Board workers are much better than anyone else. I am surprised, coming from the Government which is presumed to be a Labour Government and with a Secretary of the Barbados Workers Union in here, that they should make the claim that the conditions in one section of the industry are so much better than in the other sections. I am amazed at that statement. Is it that the Transport Board workers are the only workers

unionised in that branch and not the others? I cannot believe that. May be, the other concessionaires have a means of getting more work with less effort from their employees than the Government is able to get, and if that is so that is something for them to investigate. I am not saying that the Transport Board should increase their 44-hour a week to a 60-hour a week; but it seems to me strange that in the one small industry in the island there should be such a disparity of employment conditions. That can be explained and I hope the Minister in charge will explain that or the Hon. Minister of Trade and Labour will be back in his seat to explain that, because he is responsible for that portfolio. If he finds one section of the community under duress or is working longer hours than what it should be doing, it is time for him to step in; but may be, if they did that, we may be faced with another increase of fares or an increased subsidy from Government.

Sir, this picture is a very sad one to me; and to come here and to ask for the authority to allow the Transport Board which is showing such bad results, such poor results, such a lack of vision, in the future to be allowed to borrow money without even our knowing the sum - well, Sir, that is the same thing as giving an open cheque.

Does Government realise that they have committed themselves to great expense on capital works such as the Deep Water Harbour, a new Hospital and other things? Do you not realise that there are other things to be attended to? Do they not know that the Local Government is asking permission to borrow capital sums to be paid back? Are you mortgaging this island without any return? Have they not thought that the capital for the proper running of the public transport of this island can be found not in Government circles, but in private circles? I think the handing back of the buses to some operator who will find the capital and pay you out is the best thing to be done. You have had four years of it and you have shown a bad picture. Are you going to continue? Are you going to continue to saddle the people of this island with such a big monstrosity? You should hand them back now because, if you do not hand them back now, when you are going to sell them you will have nothing to sell, and along with that you will be selling something with a bad record. Let somebody come in and put it on a proper footing if you cannot do so - and you have tried to do so. You have brought in an expert and if he cannot give us a greater assurance than what the Hon. Minister has given us, well then, you should hand them back. You have already had to increase the fares when you said that you would not do it.

The Hon. Minister made great play that the Transport Board is rendering a public service. Of course, it is. Nobody denies that at all; but so is every concessionaire. They are all rendering a public service - the Transport Board and the Bus Concessionaires. We are interested in seeing a proper service being run but at the minimum of cost. I would like to see the people of Bathsheba and St. Philip get into Bridgetown under good conditions and at regular intervals; but if the 18 cents bus fare is unrealistic, well, put the fare where it should be. We should not deny any one a profit because unless a profit is made you cannot keep up the standard of work which you require.

Sir, I claim that it can be better done by somebody other than the Government. I have always said so and I maintain it and the figures which we have now have proved it. I understand that there is a great division in Government at the present moment over that issue. I do hope that when Mr. Cadbury advises them - as they have said that he will be advising on this matter - they will do the correct thing and will see that we are now paying too dear for a public service. It is a public service which we will have to carry on or somebody else will have to carry on. There are no railways, no air transportation; everything travels by road; therefore, this service is a 'must'. It does not mean however that we cannot have the service which we are looking for without these great losses. Fortunately, when Government took over public transport, they left some of the units to private enterprise because had they not done that, the picture could have been covered up. You have one side of the indus-

try operating efficiently and with a profit and I do not hear of any complaints save the occasional letter asking for another bus on a certain route and that applies to both. The buses of the concessionaires seem to be in better shape than those of the Transport Board, and the conductors and drivers of the concessionaires seem to be more polite; and yet, one is operating and paying taxes and making profits, and the other one is a burden to the already over-burdened taxpayers of this island.

12.55 p.m.

Unless the Minister can tell us more, what sum the Transport Board requires and also what is the policy of the Board, he should not come down here today and ask us to pass this Bill. I am not voting for it until the policy is stated, whether they will take over the entire island transport or whether they will get out of it and have a reduction somewhere; the Minister must give us a greater assurance than he has given in the past that the service will be put on a proper footing. Mr. Speaker, where are they going to find the interest on this vast sum which I can see they will require? The Hon. Minister has not yet told us, and he should know, why the money is required; is it required for getting more buses, more shops or for paying back the finance? Is it required for any of those things or for all of those things? Mr. Speaker, I will not agree to this Bill until I can get from the Hon. Minister the future policy to be carried out. If the policy is not determined, let them take back this Bill and hold it until Mr. Cadbury advises them either in one way or in the other.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that copies of the Report and Accounts of the Transport Board were only received by me yesterday afternoon; the result is that I have not had an adequate opportunity to give them the attention which they deserve. However, short as is the chance I have had at looking at this document, I will say that it is a very depressing one. Firstly, we must consider a remark made by the Hon. Minister when he was introducing this Bill last Tuesday, when he told us that he is unable to state the policy as yet. He does not know whether there will be a continuation, whether there will be an extension, whether there will be retraction or whether something akin to what we had before will be taking place having regard to what we are having now. One cannot understand the attitude of a Government which is unable up to now.....

Hon. R. G. MAPP: On a point of order. I think the hon. member's memory has failed him there. I stopped at the word "retraction"; I never said anything about "akin". At that point I stated my views; I said "retraction" as quoted by the hon. junior member for Christ Church.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Speaker, that is a point of explanation; I thought the hon. member had risen on a point of order. The hon. member mentioned "continuation", "extension" and "retraction" and then he said as a fourth consideration, something akin to what we had before; he said that that found complete disfavour with him. He put that as a possible dread alternative.

At this stage, after this Board has been in operation for so long, one cannot understand why the Government could still be unable to state its policy. Time and time again in this Chamber I have recommended to the Government there is only one sensible thing to do. You cannot run some of the transport and not the rest of it; if you undertake to run the bus service, you should undertake to run the whole service of the island. For some of the transport to be run by private concessionaires and some by the Transport Board, that is bound to bring the chaos which certainly now obtains in this country.

The deficiency on the operation of the transport service was estimated to be in the vicinity of \$50,000 in respect of the current financial year and that is why we were asked to pass and did pass that amount in respect of the present year; but now the deficiency is \$173,104.27 which means that it is \$123,000 in excess of the amount which the Government envisaged when they presented the budget for the present financial year to us. Although I have not had the time which I would have liked to study this Report and this Statement of Accounts, yet there are one or two

things which strike one in the eye as soon as one glances over casually the Fourth Annual Report of the Transport Board dealing with the period 1st October, 1958, to the period 30th September, 1959.

In reference to the Third Annual Report this document in one of its paragraphs states this:-

"These recommendations have been approved by the Board. If they are implemented it should eventually be possible to transform the service into a self-supporting unit."

Mr. Speaker, that is a curious statement to make and in this Fourth Annual Report, it is the last paragraph contained on page 3 of the Document which we now have before us. It reads as follows:-

"If these are implemented it should be possible to transform the service into a self supporting unit eventually."

I wonder if the Hon. Minister would tell us when the Government, which has been engaged in connection with this re-organisation, is likely to arrive at some definite statement of policy or is this sentence a feature of the Annual Report? Are we to look forward every year to this sentence or paragraph?

"These recommendations have been approved by the Board. If they are implemented it should eventually be possible to transform the service into a self supporting unit."

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister can shed any light upon what the Transport Board means by mentioning in the beginning of the Report this sentence:-

"During the period under review the harmonious relationships between the Ministry and the Board has been maintained."

It is not too much to expect, as a result of these harmonious relationships between the Board and the Ministry, that the Minister could enlighten this Chamber as to what the Board means when it says that it should eventually be possible to transform the service into a self supporting unit. Does "eventually" mean five years, ten years, fifteen years, or twenty years?

1.05 p.m.

I am sure that when the Hon. Minister every year reads that in his Report - I assume he reads the Reports of the Board - it must strike him as a word which requires a little clarification, especially when he sees it year after year. No doubt when he is having his talks and discussions with the Chairman and members of the Board, he must seek some information as to what the Board means when it says that it should eventually be possible to transform the service into a self-supporting unit if the recommendations of the Managing Director are implemented. He should also urge his colleagues in Government to assist him in arriving at some decision in connection with these recommendations.

One wonders, for instance, Mr. Speaker, if the Managing Director recommended that the Government take over and run the entire passenger transport service in this island, and if he has recommended that, why has the Government not taken some steps to bring that about? The present condition is not only unsatisfactory, but it must be almost unique in any small country such as this, a place of 166 square miles, to find a Government transport service and five, six, seven or eight small transport services run by private enterprise.

I assume, Mr. Speaker, that these private concessionaires are making a profit out of their business; so how can one account for the failure of the Transport Board which has a larger number of units which should be able to function better, and to be purchased more cheaply, because of buying a larger number of accessories, buses and everything of that sort? Why is it that this Transport Board

is unable even to cover its expenses, far less using the amount of money which annually it has to use? I would like the Minister to tell us when he gets up to reply, Mr. Speaker, whether these clerks whose number has been reduced have been found employment in some other sphere of activity, or whether those who have been turned off have had their names put on the register of the Employment Bureau in this island.

Well, Sir, another sentence which must call for comment in this Report is that bus fares had been reported upon as being low and unrealistic. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, by whom have they been so reported. Have the private concessionaires who are functioning in this island at the moment reported that the fares are low and unrealistic? Have they reported that they are losing as a result of these fares being low and unrealistic? Does your Managing Director say that the fares are low and unrealistic? Mr. Speaker, you might as well let the Ministry and the Board know that the public of this island cannot afford to pay any increased bus fares on what they are paying now. The talk of fares being low and unrealistic suggests that they are toying with the idea of making a further proposal to increase bus fares. As you know, Sir, it would be absolutely beyond the means of the average person who travels by bus to contemplate further increases in bus fares. The increases which the private concessionaires had asked for some time ago when they were in existence before the Transport Board would not have brought the bus fares to what is being charged now. I do not know, if they had got the increase they had asked for, whether they would come back soon again and ask for something more; but I am saying that what Government should have done was to increase the fares when they decided to increase to a figure not as high as they did now, but to a figure not more than the increase which the private concessionaires had asked for.

Then there is reference in the Report, Mr. Speaker, to turnstiles being imported and that it is expected that these will be put into service in due course. Now, Mr. Speaker, if these turnstiles which have been imported are put into service, will that mean the laying off of any persons on these Transport Board buses or will the same number of persons be required? Will a conductor be required as well when a turnstile is installed? Obviously, we cannot afford to turn conductors out of employment, and if the idea is to put in turnstiles to save the cost of men per bus, then the quicker Government gets the idea of using turnstiles out of its head, the better. In my view, unless you run the entire passenger transport system in this island, you will not be able to run the economical service which you should provide the public with. You have only half or a certain number of buses under your control; but if you have the entire service, Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that you will be able to purchase your buses, parts, accessories, petrol, oils and everything at a much cheaper rate, because of the vast volume of business you will be doing and that will enable you to keep fares within the capacity of the persons who are called upon to travel by bus, and within the means of those people whose only form of transport it is.

There is amongst the Objects and Reasons of the Bill which is before us, Mr. Speaker, reference to three main Heads and one is to provide for the payment of an auditor approved by the Governor-in-Executive Committee. I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, what is the real reason behind that proposal in this Bill. Is the Governor-in-Executive Committee dissatisfied, doubtful or cynical about the auditing of the accounts as they are done at present? I notice that this balance sheet which is dated 30th September, 1959 is signed by Messrs. Fitzpatrick, Graham and Company, Chartered Accountants, as Auditors. I do not know if the Governor-in-Executive Committee feels that the Transport Board plan changing their auditors and getting auditors less highly qualified than Messrs. Fitzpatrick, Graham and Company, or what it is that has caused them to include amongst the Objects and Reasons of this new Bill the proposal to provide for the payment of an auditor approved of by the Governor-in-Executive Committee to do the accounts of this Board.

I notice that seems to be regarded as the first and prior consideration in this new Bill, because they go on

to point out that if they do not approve of the person appointed by the Transport Board, then the Governor-in-Executive Committee may appoint such person as they think fit. There must be some reason why, and I will be much interested to learn what the reason is that Government is seeking to have this power conferred on them.

The Section of the Bill which has caused one the greatest worry is that section dealing with the guarantee of loans raised by the Board.

1.15 p.m.

If we pass that part of the Bill - and I am certainly not convinced that we should pass it - the part to enable the Government, subject to the approval of the Legislature, to guarantee loans raised by the Board for the purpose of meeting their obligations, and in which it is proposed in the relevant section of this Bill to let the Board borrow by way of loan, overdraft or otherwise such sums as the Board may require for meeting their obligations or discharging their functions under this Act; and then, Mr. Speaker, as one understands further that it is proposed to give the Board power to borrow any sum at all, subject, of course, to the approval of the Governor-in-Executive Committee, which the Board wants without any ceiling whatsoever, without any limit placed on it, for the discharging of their functions, that could mean one million dollars or two million dollars. You just would not know where you are if you give this *carte blanche* or sign this blank cheque because there is no limit to the amount of money; the sky is the limit to which the Board with the approval of the Governor-in-Executive Committee could go.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, may I just remind the hon. member that that Clause is no more than what you have so far as the Development Board and the Housing Authority have in their respective Acts. We have given the Housing Authority the same power.

You will remember the other day they wanted us to guarantee them a loan from the bank and we had to come to this House to give them the authority. The same thing would have to be done in respect of the Transport Board. Constitutionally, it cannot be done without this House knowing; therefore, there is no *carte blanche* or blank cheques being given the Transport Board. Constitutionally, the matter will have to come to this House.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Speaker, I hope my hearing has not become affected. I never heard the Hon. Minister state that he was rising on a point of order or that he was asking me to give way. However, Sir, the point is that this Bill is asking that the Board be given a *carte blanche* to sign a cheque, so long as it is countersigned by the Governor-in-Executive Committee. If we give them that general authority now, when they come to us with a Resolution it will make no difference; we could make nothing of it, because the members of the Cabinet will have loyally to support the Resolution, and the back-benchers likewise will have loyally to support the Government whether they agree or not with the Resolution which will be put before us. If we give them this power now, there is nothing more which we can do about it afterwards except to express our disapproval when we are asked to sanction the Resolution to enable them to borrow these sums which they are seeking.

There is no analogy between the Housing Authority and the Transport Board because the Housing Authority is an institution which certainly is being run with efficiency and which has engendered a certain amount of public confidence. The Housing Authority has the power which is now sought to be given to the Transport Board; but the Housing Authority by the way which it is conducting its business has inspired a certain amount of confidence while the Transport Board, far from inspiring confidence, has got the taxpayers of this country more depressed, more pessimistic than they have been in respect of the spending of public funds by the Government. You cannot say because a well run Board has been given a certain power, therefore it is reason for a badly run Board to be given that certain power. That is the incomprehensible argument which the Hon. Minister is putting forward.

Sir, I notice a reference in the last paragraph of the Objects and Reasons to do with this Bill which enables regulations to be made to ensure good order in the transportation of passengers in the vehicles of the Board.

Mr. Speaker, I do not like the wide powers which these regulations propose to confer so that authority will be given any person employed as a Conductor or Inspector in the service of the Transport Board to eject from any vehicle used by the Board in their passenger road transport any person failing to comply with their orders. I do not like to give that wide power to any Conductor or Inspector to eject any passenger on a bus for failure to comply with any provision contained in any regulations.

The general amendment in this new Bill which seeks to deal with the power vested in the Government to sanction any loan obtained by the Board is the most objectionable feature of this Bill. It has not been justified by the sponsor of it and a comparison which he made with similar powers vested in the Housing Authority in my submission shows that the Hon. Minister is completely unrealistic when he attempts to use that as an argument to convince us that we should confer this power upon the Transport Board. I wonder if he regards the Housing Authority as being run as inefficiently as the Transport Board. I wonder if he puts them in the same category. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this Bill before us has given us the opportunity to discuss the Transport Board and its activities generally and to let the Government understand that they just cannot go on not making up their minds about what they are going to do with public passenger transport as run by the Transport Board. It just is not good enough, five years after the Transport Board Act was passed, for the Government to say that it is not able to state its policy or it is not able to say whether to continue with their running public transport. How long will it take for you to know? How many more years will it take for the Minister to make up his mind or to formulate policy? It is obvious that whichever way they turn, they are scared. A Government without a policy in a matter like this, a Government which has failed, so far as I gather, to implement the proposals of the Managing Director as stated by the Transport Board, a Government which has been unable to come to any decision as to what it would do about this vexed question of public passenger transport, is obviously a Government which is failing in its duty in this as in every other respect, and proving itself incapable to run the affairs of the country, because surely in five years - of course, we work by a Five Year Plan - they should have been able to arrive at a plan as to how to run these buses.

I note with dismay that the drivers of the Transport Board are paid less per day than are the drivers of the Transport Board in Trinidad who perform a similar duty. Whereas some of our drivers are paid as little as \$3.36 a day and some \$3.76 per day, we have failed to copy the good example of Trinidad and pay our omnibus Drivers \$4.00 per day.

1.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I will leave that aspect of it, of course, for the hon. senior member for St. Peter to dilate on if and when he sees fit to discuss that aspect of the matter; but it is depressing to see in a public document with reference to a public Board that we fare badly as compared with Trinidad. In Barbados bus drivers are paid \$3.36 a day as against Trinidad where they are paid \$4.00 a day. Bearing in mind that our streets are narrower than those in Trinidad, a greater standard of skill and efficiency is required of a bus driver in this island than in Trinidad where the road communications are so much better than they are in this island. As we are at present advised, unless the Government can convince us that this Transport Board is justified in having the same powers conferred on it as the Housing Board has in relation to the making of loans, I do not see how we can possibly dream of passing that part of this Bill which will give them this power which they are seeking and of which they have shown themselves so incapable and so unworthy of being entrusted with.

Mr. DOWDING: Mr. Speaker, all of us will remember the statement "not over my dead body". It seems to me

that there is some obeah, some voodoo, some type of spiritualism that is dogging the foot steps of this dead horse. Sir, it is to me remarkable that this honourable House of Assembly is being asked to continue time and time again to go on flogging this dead horse when the figures prove that it is a dead loss. This, Sir, is an obsession; I recently heard the word used by a Minister which would seem to indicate that this question of the Transport system in this island has become an obsession with the present Government who, in spite of the fact that they have now had five years in which to put right what they said was wrong, the system is today, apart from the fact that we have new buses which must be more comfortable, a threat to the life-blood of this island. Hundreds and thousands of dollars of the taxpayers' money are flowing under the wheels of these white elephants, the buses. I, personally, think that it is a waste of time for hon. members of this House to continue to try, by reasonable argument and reasonable deduction, to convince the present Government. With this particular project, there is a dead loss; the members of the Government have been advised on more than one occasion that it is a dead loss; and when I look at this Report I can only say that it seems to me that the present Managing Director, whom they have brought down, is also of the same thought, that is - well, it seems to me that this is a matter of darkness and gloom. Some dead body is knocking around this matter; I am wondering if, under the present circumstances, it could ever be brought back to life. That could certainly not take place under the present regime because this thing has become an obsession. Here it is that the Managing Director, a year ago, made recommendations and the Board has accepted them; but the highest authority of this island, which is the House of Assembly, has no clue as to what his recommendations are. One must only deduce that there is something in these recommendations similar to that which was made by the original Commission which was appointed to enquire into the matter and which said that the bus fares were low and unrealistic. This Government - one could not blame them at this juncture - decided that these recommendations would be unrealistic as far as they are concerned at this moment politically. That is the only deduction I can make. When one looks at the structure and sees the rate of depreciation, when one looks at the actual units on the road and is reliably informed that when five buses are sent to do one trip as they might do, but they might also do two trips each - of course, with five buses there are still only five trips but there is the money for ten trips which is missing somewhere - one can well realise what the situation is.

I personally hope that this information will be stressed by whosoever knows it. I am told by a reliable source that all is not well among the employees; I am also told by a reliable source that certain employees were asked to take an examination and I want to ask the Minister how many employees were asked to take that examination, how many were not asked to take such examination, what were the results of this examination, who set the papers, how many employees took the examination and what happened to each and everyone of them. Mr. Speaker, my information is that those who were given the uniforms never took any examination, but the ones who took the examination were the ones who were not given the uniform and that their services are no longer required.

1.35 p.m.

I would like, Sir, to get that cleared up, because unless the employees' morale is high, naturally the losses will be high. When morale is low, Sir, money has a way of disappearing, but when it is high things are better.

I came across an article, Sir, of The Caribbean, Volume 2, No. 8 and I would like to quote from it. "Hopes and debts are not sufficient foundations on which to build. The leaders and people of the countries seeking a better level of living need to realise that they cannot get it out of a mail order catalogue on charge account." This is a charge account which the taxpayers who happen not to be dead at the end of the period will continue to pay for. "Not over my dead body"! It has a very great significance, in my opinion. I do not believe in obeah, but we have heard ominous rumours recently, and you know that even obeah at some

times is slow and moves in mysterious ways. There has been a recent occurrence, and although I do not wish the particular person any ill, I sincerely hope his finger which has been damaged is restored to its normal use, but that ominous statement is hanging over the Transport Board from its inception; and if we continue not to face realities and the realistic statements made by Commissions and by Managing Directors, but rather stick to this oboe of retaining something which is a dead loss regardless of the improvement which they claim for it, this situation will not improve. Let us face up to facts. What improvement has there been? Do not let us hear anything about what happened two hundred years ago, because if that ever starts again I am going back and tell people about their original ancestors and what they used to do. Two hundred years have gone and this Government has been in power for two decades, and it is time that they face their accomplishments in those two decades and face up to the facts and arguments of today rather than arguing on dead bodies gone years and years ago.

When the Companies wanted to import similar types of buses which the Government has on the road today, they were refused permission. One Company imported a similar type of bus and had it in his garage for 18 months before eventually the authority who was then, I believe, the Director of Highways and Transport allowed him, after he had the sides cut, a door here and there, thus disfiguring the whole bus, permission for it to be put on the road. These improvements could have been made at the same time under private enterprise who were willing to make the improvements but were not allowed because of the Laws of the Government at the time which controlled the size, length, doors etc. of the buses. Government has now taken over and all that has gone by the way and they can now import improved buses. Do not let us really believe that the service has been improved any more than it could have been under private enterprise. All private enterprise was asking for was what they themselves have done and that is increased busfares and the bringing in of new buses of a different type.

The Hon. Minister of Agriculture mentioned a few days ago that leaders need to face up to the hard facts of life, that the main springs of any progress must come from within a nation and not from without, and that economic growth is part of balanced development embracing Law and order, political stability and responsibility, financial integrity, education and the gradual spread of its benefits to a widening circle of people. I think, Sir, that if that paragraph could be written in bold letters by the Hon. Premier and put in the office of every Minister, it would be a wonderful thing for him to look at every morning. We know that this system is a dead loss after four years. We are today asked to agree to a Bill which is tantamount to signing the taxpayers over to continuing to allow their blood to flow under the wheels of these dead horses. If there is another reason, why have we not been told? If there is another project and if the Managing Director a year ago had made recommendations, if the Government has something up its sleeve or up its leg about the buses which is going to make it a financial success and not a dead loss as far as the taxpayers are concerned, why don't they say it? When I say taxpayers, I mean all inclusive, because everybody in this island contributes to the running of the island in one way or another, and the more of their dollars that flow down this voodoo drain, the more they are going to suffer.

Why, Sir, can't this Hon. House be informed of the recommendations? I can only deduce, as I have said originally, that these recommendations have in them some realistic facts such as the increase of bus fares which the leaders of this Government refuse to face realistically at this juncture. I can only conclude that, Sir, because we have already had experience of exactly the same thing, and when all was said and done there was only the fact that it was held back. I am under the impression—and I hope the Hon. Minister will be able to refute or answer me—that there must be some reason for withholding this information. When one reads this Report, Sir, signed by the Chairman, Mr. M. D. Symmonds, one merely wonders as to the efficiency of this Transport Board.

1.45 p.m.

Sir, we have got all sorts of grammatical errors running through this Report, and as far as its being a Report which any business firm would put out, I invite all hon. members to look at this Report and read it and then place it against the Report of a proper business firm and let them see what the difference is.

Now, we are told that in the Third Annual Report the Managing-Director made certain recommendations which the Board approved of and that if they are implemented, eventually it would be possible to transform the service. Again, Sir, we have this spiritualistic idea that transformation is going to take place with this dead body, but there are no facts as to how it is going to be transformed. Is it going to be transformed with a set of dead horses to pull the bottom? Is it going to be transformed by doing away with the diesel buses and bringing in new gasoline buses which today is the thought in Canada of providing a more economical service? Has the Government any facts which they can produce or have produced to warrant the passing of this Bill? They have none. They have given us no facts at all. It is merely going to be a transformation. "Abracadabra" you say, and you would get this dead body turned into a living, virile unit which is going to be a self-supporting unit and one which is going to give better service.

Unfortunately, Sir, I do not believe in spiritualism. I would like to see a factual report before you ask me to consent to any further number of dollars of the taxpayers' money going down the drain. It is unreasonable, unethical and unparliamentary for this Government to come here and expect us to consent to this Bill without giving us the facts of the case in order that we can make a proper contribution to the debate. We are told nothing, absolutely and utterly nothing, of the future of this Transport Board, but we are expected to agree with this Bill. I, Sir, will not agree except after reasonable argument, reasonable debate and factual, realistic statements from the Minister concerned. I do not know if he has a method unknown to all of us, unknown to all except one of his expert advisers; but if only he will explain it to us, we will be then in a position to say that we have seen the four last balance sheets and the colossal loss on them, but we would say "yes" to what you are recommending now. We say "yes" because we can see that there is something in it and therefore we would give it our consent. But no; we are not allowed to see any daylight; therefore, there is this darkness, this mysterious deadbody organisation, as I have called it already.

However, Sir, there are a number of things which one must compliment them for having done. One is the training of employees, another the improved wages as well as a number of other small matters which they have done. One must say that one agrees with that; but without any realistic statement of the future operational cost of this Transport Board in spite of the pretty buses which they now operate, I must stop to warn.

Mr. Speaker, a diesel unit is a very expensive unit at first cost, and for some time the repairs may look negligible; but a diesel unit when it has to go under repairs more often needs replacements rather than repairs. Any owner of diesel motors will tell you that; therefore, if we can get from the Minister the proposed life of these diesel motors, we would be glad to learn. Here I must stop and ask how many of these diesel buses are already not in use and condemned. I would like to know that. I cannot find it anywhere in the Report. As a matter of fact, I cannot find out anything factual in these Reports apart from the bald statement of the cost of running a diesel bus and that of running a gasoline unit. Any person who is running buses will know what every single bus is costing to run it and that is the only way that you can operate a bus service efficiently.

If this House is able to get such facts, hon. members will be able to make even better deductions out of this darkness. But no; we are not given those facts. All we hear is of further reports and the Minister stating that shortly he will be making a statement; but how shortly, that is unknown to us. I do not know if that would not be eventual as

stated in this Report. "Eventual" may mean five years from now. Again, you see, we are talking of a myth. The Managing-Director's recommendations are all mythical because, as we can see, the Government after all these years is not in a position to give effect to his statement. They say they will be doing so shortly, eventually. They give us no facts.

Well, Sir, unless I am given an indication as to the facts for the future I am unable to add my vote to this Bill. There is no doubt in my mind, as I take it, that hon. members over on the other side who are influenced by this spiritualistic obsession which began will have no alternative but to continue to vote spiritualistically for it, but my vote will be a matter of fact and a realistic vote in that I must have from the Minister facts and figures concerning what is being put in front of us before I can add my vote to whichever side it may be, either "Aye" or "No."

1.55 p.m.

I notice that this Transport Board operates with its gasoline units at 60 cents per gallon and its diesel oil at 58 1/2 cents per gallon. I am wondering, Sir, if the hon. member could inform me if that is the price which is also allowed to the private concessionaires, or is it that there is a Government monopoly. It would be interesting to find out exactly what is the case - because one may be told that the answer is that the private concessionaires pay more - in order to get a greater comparison with these figures.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken somewhat longer than I intended to speak, I believe, and I think that all hon. members on this side also believe, that imported experts, "Cadburys", "Rowntrees", "Ronald trees" or any other type of trees would be unable to convince the Government that they are obsessed with the idea that, one man having said that the bus fares would not be raised over his dead body, that spiritualistic atmosphere must continue for ever.

This balance sheet has in it a lot of figures but they are just a summary really. What we would like to have from the Hon. Minister is a detailed statement not necessarily from him now, because that would be asking too much; but we would like to have put before us not necessarily the whole fleet of buses, but about six of the average diesel buses and six gasoline buses, and let us have the actual day-to-day cost and so forth, which system, I understand, this gentleman has put into vogue. If we had these figures, we would then be better able to understand the balance sheet. I do hope that we will be given some further light in this darkness, this terrible, dead darkness.

Mr. COREIN: Mr. Speaker,

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

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

2.00 p.m.

On re-assembling,

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, there is no quorum present and I ask that the Bell be rung.

On the bell being rung, a quorum was obtained,

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. (after a pause). There being no questions ready, the House will proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER called Orders Nos. 1 to 10 inclusive under Private Members' Business. (After a pause.)

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no hon. member prepared to go on with any Private Members' Business, the House will revert to Government Business.

TRANSPORT BOARD (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. SPEAKER: On the suspension of the sitting for lunch, the motion for the second reading of a Bill to amend the Transport Board Act, 1955 was being debated. The hon. junior member for St. Andrew was about to address the House.

Mr. COREIN: Mr. Speaker, with reference to what the last speaker has said concerning the Transport Board, I remember that during last year I spoke concerning the losses on the operation of these buses; I remember saying that the tank was catching the water and it was leaking out, and in that case we will have to continue running in the water. This makes me remember the Barbados Government Railway which used to be run at a loss; the Government still continued to run it and today I see it stated that the Managing Director has said that he will transform the transport service into a self-supporting unit. Sir, I challenge him that as long as the Barbados Government runs the bus service, it will never be a self supporting unit. I say that because it seems to me as if the whole trouble is that the management is very bad. I remember some time ago travelling on one of the large buses and one of the conductresses said that she left the bus stand with 100 tickets and when she was returning to the stand she had 50. When she got back to the stand the whole number of tickets was distributed. The time came for her to go out again and she went on without tickets. Mr. Speaker, I heard that with my own ears. Nobody could tell how many people she carried in the bus at that particular time and when she returned she did not know. That is bad business; it is not the fault of the Minister, it is the fault of the authorities.

2.35 p.m.

Last year, Sir, we granted a great sum of money for the upkeep of these buses, and now we are being asked to give them permission to borrow money to run the buses. I am not against that, Sir, because I realise that the Government has to run a proper service; but what shocked my modesty is to see how the poor local concessionaires are running their buses. They have no one to subsidise them and yet they are running a proper service all the time. When one bus deteriorates, they furnish another in its place. Why can't the Transport Board do that also? I would remove all the old busses and give the Director of Highways and Transport new ones and challenge him that he would never be able to make it a self-supporting unit.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Minister is absent, but I would like to say that the Director of Highways and Transport does not run these buses.

Mr. COREIN. Mr. Speaker, I do not mean the Director of Highways and Transport; I mean the Managing Director of the Transport Board. I have seen the poor concessionaires scotch their buses in Spring Vale Hill and then repair them in order that they may get the people to their destination, and yet they can replace the old buses with new ones all the time. Why can't the Transport Board do that too? If we are not careful, and allow this business to go on in this way, this island will run into Chancery and you will have to give it over to Satan, because I cannot understand how the Transport Board is running at all. We are subsidising it this year and will subsidise it next year. What is the meaning of all this? Are they not making money? I would prefer to give them back to the private concessionaires and grant them every year small sums to help them run them; but as long as Government runs these buses they will be run at a total loss. I will challenge this Government or the next to disprove these words from my feeble mouth, that it is going to be continuous.

If the Managing Director is talking about transforming the service, the first thing he has to do after transforming it is to transform the minds of the conductors from old into new, and then he would be doing the right thing. As soon as he does that the water will stop leaking out of the tank and you will be able to draw out water to meet your needs at convenient seasons.

You have one of the biggest staffs in the island, and I do not think that private concessionaires have half as many as the Transport Board.

I will say, Sir, that if we make a way for the Transport Board to borrow money, we should open the door and help the poor concessionaires to purchase buses. The Government should lend private concessionaires money to buy buses to transport people to and from various places, because they are helping the Government, as it were. If we do not help them we will have to take over all and Satan will get dominion over them sooner. We are giving them power to borrow money but I warn them that whenever they get this money they should take care of it and spend it to the best of their ability. When I buy a suit I wear it and work and purchase another; otherwise I would go naked if I did not appropriate my money into good uses. In the same way, the Board should try to put its money to good uses and get behind both the conductors and the checkers and see that they do their duty, and by so doing I think it would profit the Transport Board if they take a proper interest in their work.

I hope, Sir, that if we give them permission to borrow this money, as the Managing Director has said, it will be possible to transform the service into a self-supporting unit, that they will not be asking Government to subsidise them with any more money; and I wish them the best of luck in running a service to the best of their ability.

Mr. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, there many temptations which beset a Government, and they have to try their best to fight and avoid these temptations as much as they can. There is one temptation, Sir, which all Governments should try to avoid, and that is the temptation of wanting to appear to be right when it is manifestly wrong.

Hon. members who have spoken in this matter today on the Bill before us - because it is a Bill we are discussing and not the Transport Board accounts as such - have allowed, I think, their worry and their anxiety at the condition which manifests itself in the Transport Board to obscure the real issues at stake. Of course the Board is losing money; of course it has lost money; and of course it is good prophesy to make that it will continue to lose; but why is it losing, Mr. Speaker? What is at the bottom or at the back of its policy or lack of policy which brings about this situation which we have before us today?

2.45 p.m.

I, for one, do not think that I need waste my time on the accounts which have been presented before us. For one thing, these accounts though properly audited have not been properly prepared and I give my opinion without hesitation and fear of contradiction. I believe that they have been cooked. I believe that they have been cooked because there is no reason why they could not be given to us shortly after the end of the Board's financial year. If as is stated, it has taken from the 30th September until the 4th February to give us accounts which vary only in arithmetic, but not in substance, from the accounts rendered from the same source, it is clear that there has been much pondering and wondering as to how to get accounts in a presentable form to present to this House and in a manner which would not show too glaring a picture.

I have been told that a set of accounts were presented to the Cabinet within the Statutory period, but when the Cabinet saw those accounts they were very bewildered and very worried and decided that the state of affairs disclosed by the accounts was so bad that the accounts had to be sent back to the Board to see whether the Board would be able to adjust those accounts. Let us put it like that. Whether they could have been adjusted, whether what was the audit here could have been the audit there, whether the "i" which was dotted here was dotted there, whether the "t" which was crossed here was crossed there, whether the "o" which was made then could be made to appear like a "6" or a "9" and hence they adjusted the accounts to meet the situation - so the story goes-

and the Cabinet then thought those accounts were fit and proper and presented them to this House, I do not know. That is the story as I have learnt it. It is up to the Minister to say whether that is so or not. This much can be said. It has taken more than four months for these accounts which except for arithmetic are the same as they were in the preceding years to reach this House. How far they have been adjusted, I do not know. If they had been adjusted, I would not know; but I know this whether or not the Cabinet was so dissatisfied with them, when the picture was presented to them, they sent them back to the Board and what they have sent to us now is nothing as unsatisfactory as what the Cabinet saw.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Government has never sent back any figures by the Auditors of the Board to the Board. The hon. member always comes out with these fantastic imaginations of his. These are the figures which the Auditors submitted to the Cabinet. Added to that, a member of the Board is himself an Accountant.

Mr. TUDOR: It is all very well for the Hon. Minister to say that. I said that I have been told that the accounts for the financial year ended September 1959 were submitted to the Cabinet and were sent back because the members of the Cabinet did not like them. That is what I have been told. Therefore, if he denies that audited accounts had been sent back, he is quite in order because that was not asserted. The accounts for the period October 1958, to September, 1959, were seen by him and members of the Cabinet. They did not like the accounts then because the picture disclosed was too severe on their eyes. That is what the Hon. Minister has to deny now.

Any way, Mr. Speaker, the real issue is this. We have a Bill before us which asks two things. One is to enable the Government to appoint an Auditor for the Transport Board. Let us deal with that. From the Board's inception it has enjoyed the services of Messrs. FitzPatrick Graham & Company, than which firm there is no more competent company of Chartered Accountants in this island or anywhere else for that matter. When therefore you ask the House to approve a new departure in policy though the Board has its own Auditor, hon. members must draw some conclusions; and one conclusion to be drawn at this stage of the Board's accounts is either that the Board or the Governor-in-Executive Committee does not approve of the way in which the present auditing is done. But I say that when Messrs. FitzPatrick Graham & Company audits for a company or a Board their integrity cannot be questioned; so if you want to change them you will not be changing on the grounds that their auditing was incorrect.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Let me assure the House that we have absolutely no doubt in the integrity or the ability of the present auditors of that Board. We are simply putting in the Act a provision which was not there before. I think it is the hon. senior member for St. Peter who pointed that out to the Board. It is a provision which should be there so far as these semi-statutory boards are concerned. I repeat, it is no reflection on the present auditors.

Mr. TUDOR: I thank the Hon. Minister for that statement but it is passing strange that this provision should be linked with something which is more important. This is something which can be done at any time, and if it is not done now, it cannot affect the management of the Board. It means this, that when we are doing this, it is mere formality; but it does show that because we choose to do it now, because you find it necessary to do it now, is because you probably have failed to believe in the integrity of the present Auditors.

The second provision of the Bill is to enable the Board to borrow money which the Government would guarantee. One of the reasons why the Transport Board appears to give so much trouble is that people's memories are so short, not only the memory of the Federal Prime Minister but even the memories of the present members

of this House. This is no reflection on them but it was only after diligent seeking that I can piece together this story and make a coherent code of it. To understand what is going on and what has led up to the path we are now in, you have to go back to 1955. To cut a long story short, this is what happened. The then bus concessionaires drew the attention of the Government to the fact that they could not operate their services unless they were granted an increase of bus fares which had not been increased since 1939. The Government set up a Committee to consider it. The Committee paid careful hearing to the bus concessionaires and recommended an increase in bus fares and other things as well.

2.55 p.m.

The Government, for political reasons only, and I repeat, for political reasons, refused to grant the proposed increase on the ground that the increase was not necessary; that the bus concessionaires could build houses and bungalows and spend the profits accruing from ownership of buses in other directions and therefore they should put that money into the operation of their concessions. That was not the finding of the Committee; that was the political reason given by the members opposite for not giving an increase. The Government said that they would give a rebate on the gasoline and the bus concessionaires said: "If we tell you what it will take to do all that is required, how can we take something which is less than that?" The Government had the power; an election was a year or so away and they thought they would take a plunge, which they now know is a blunder, and did not grant the increase in bus fares. But after the Federal Elections they increased the bus fares; so now we are asked to say whether the increase which was refused in 1955 was a genuine one when in 1958 it had to be granted at a rate higher than what was requested at the time.

Not only in here, but on public platforms people were told what villains the concessionaires were; the concessionaires were reviled and held up to ridicule, merely to put over a political point. We did not resist the decision because we feel that it is only the duty of a Government to govern; and as long as the Government had the desire to operate the transport, nobody had the right, believing as we do in the principle of public ownership, to deny them that opportunity; but we made sure to give them the benefit of our advice and counsel in that undertaking. I have the debate of the 18th August, 1955, before me in which I made the major speech on the transport issue and pointed out to the Minister, who is now the Minister of Trade, Industry and Labour, that there are two inescapable principles which have to be applied in the operation of public transport. I said the first is the method of administering it and the second was the method of financing it. It is here in detail what I said. I drew their attention to the British Transport Act of 1947 and I pointed out that, as far as financing is concerned, it would be better to allow the Transport Board to start off on its own feet; but in order to do that you would have to give it certain powers, which, if given, would preclude political interference.

Now we get to the real rub of the question: one of the main causes of difficulty in the administration of the Board is that it has been used as a sort of dumping ground for political supporters. If you are known to be manifestly opposed to them, you cannot get any employment there; but if you are with the Government in power, you can get employment. It is only that; resting as it does with little supervision from the Ministerial side, there is a wide discretion left to the top people who are employed there, to bring in their friends and relations. That being so, you will find that from time to time the Board is staffed not only with Mr. "X" and his cousins, but also with his aunts, his nephews and children and those of his uncles who are Government supporters; and in the ring of incompetence you have people holding up each other's hands, covering up each other's mistakes, and milking the taxpayers meanwhile by not doing the work which they have been appointed to do. For that state of affairs I hold the entire Cabinet responsible. I happen to know that the situation is so serious that the Cabinet is divided on this issue; I know if the matter rested with the Premier

and certainly with the Minister of Trade and one or two other Ministers tomorrow, they would wind up the Transport Board; but the Minister who is responsible for transport, wants to hold on to it like grim death; he would prefer rather than be realistic enough to say: "We have made a costly error and therefore let us try and make no more", to break down the reputation of the Government and of the House because they can do no better under the present circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, these are hard criticisms, but they have to be made because, unless you trace things to their roots, you will not be able to do anything about them. Of course, in principle, public ownership is a good thing, but one does not have public ownership for its own sake. It is not that public ownership is better than private ownership or that private ownership is better than public ownership (*Pause*). Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister cannot have the file of the House of Assembly now; they have had it long enough. I was saying, Sir, that the difference between public ownership and private ownership is not that one is better than the other, but that you offer and render the services which are called for. It is a question of efficiency in administration and clear-headedness in finance. We had no reservations in supporting the taking over of the transport services, but we wanted the position to be quite clear. At that time, I spoke on the issue and I quoted the example of the setting up of the British Transport Commission in 1947. I said that the means of financing the Commission was that the Commission was empowered to issue its own stock against a Treasury guarantee; and it was also permitted to undertake a certain amount of short-term borrowing from the banks.

3.05 p.m.

Now you laughed at that then and did not do it, but what have you done? You ignored the point that in setting up a Board you should allow it to issue its own stock and make legal provision for it against a Treasury guarantee. Now that you have thrown away nearly \$2 million of the taxpayers' money, you are prepared to allow the Board to borrow against a Treasury guarantee with greater disadvantages. That is what you are now proposing to do and that is why the Bill is wrong in principle. It means that the Board will be in effect borrowing from the Government because everybody knows that the Transport Board has no assets. The Governor-in-Executive Committee has not handed over anything yet to the Transport Board. How are you going to convince the commercial Banks or any other concern to make loans available to the Transport Board? It is only a certain amount of legal eye-wash to say you are allowing the Board to borrow money against a Government guarantee, because the situation is exactly as it has always been.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but while we are on this point, I notice here in the accounts it is stated in bold type that the funds made available by the Government of Barbados, probably since 1955, are \$1,691,911.83; yet when one adds up the disbursements since 1955 which this Hon. House have sanctioned, you get something like \$1,754,298, a difference of roughly \$62,000. However, I am not concerned with what is said here because I am convinced myself, as I said before, that these figures have been cooked, stewed and adjusted so that even if they do not record that \$62,000, I do not think that matters; and I would not hold that against them, because if they find it necessary for instance to inflate their accounts with items which had the Board been properly run, would not need to be included, what else would they not do? Can you imagine hearing them mention among their assets things like "tyres in use", "batteries in use"? The point is that if they are in use they are part of the units already operating; therefore you should make some record of your replacements; but you do not have to inflate your accounts to put all these things in. It would be taken for granted that they are there and they would be recorded among the assets as such; but that they have to put in things like "Advertisers", "Workmen's Compensation Insurance unexpired", means that they were literally scratching about for sums to include in their balance sheet to make it look a little less disreputable. If they had to do that - I am not arguing too severely against that - I feel that the

situation for them must be so terrible that they would do anything to make it look better.

I notice in passing - and I cannot help thinking - that while we have voted \$1,754,000 they say that they have received \$1,691,000. That is something that should be looked at more carefully.

Now Mr. Speaker, let us continue. They tell us without specifically saying what the rate of depreciation is on the buses that last year's depreciation is about \$90,000; they tell us that the operating loss for that period is \$173,000. This is my belief, Mr. Speaker. I am not laying it down dogmatically, but it happens to be my belief - and I would have to hear a lot of argument to convince me otherwise - that if after taking into account the circumstances of the Board their depreciation for that year was as much as \$90,000, for whatever reason, the operating losses were much more than \$173,000. I would not be surprised if the true picture were known to find that the operational loss was nearer \$300,000. The hon. member for Christ Church asked in his speech what would have happened if they had to pay interest on the advances made by Government. I would not even ask that. I would only say that to get a true picture of their operating loss for that year, just multiply their depreciation by 2 1/2 or 3 and you will see what it would look like. It has got to be so because if you look at the accounts from 1956-57 through 1957-58 and the last one, you would see that the rate is rapid; but as I said, Mr. Speaker, if the auditor is satisfied with what the Board has presented, that is a matter for them. The House must accept the figures as put before it, but need not necessarily give any credence to them.

Now the alternatives, Mr. Speaker, are these: can you afford to maintain the Transport Board? If you cannot afford to maintain it, what are you going to do with it? I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether it is a fact that political prestige must account for so much, that the Government of Barbados would prefer to ruin this island financially than to quote the losses which the taxpayers are presently incurring. Is it not time to make an agonising reappraisal of this whole situation and, if it is necessary to wind up the Board, to do so? I admit I can well see from the Government's point of view how embarrassing it would be for them to admit that their own bailiwick, the thing that they nourished and cherished, had turned out to be such a snake in their bosoms; but since we know that the majority of the Cabinet are in favour of winding up the Board, while the Minister himself holds out, we want to know if the Premier does not think that the harmony of his Cabinet as well as the well being of this island require the Minister's head on a platter, or if he has not got a platter, the Minister's head anyway. How comes that the Cabinet is divided? No Cabinet has a right to be divided on so grave a matter or on any matter.

If the facts as presented and known by the Cabinet foreshadow the continual loss of public funds, the Cabinet has one inescapable duty, and that is to recommend to the Legislature and through them to the public that transport is not a paying concern, that they cannot administer it, and not being able to administer it, they are willing to seek alternative policies and execute these alternative policies. It is a matter of political courage.
3.15 p.m.

I cannot guarantee that when you do that the Opposition will not have some criticisms to make, because we will have to examine your method of winding up the Board. We will have to examine your method because we will not like to think that you took away buses from one set of people, and then when you come to a decision to let them go you give them to other people without consulting those from whom you took them. But if in a fair and square way you come to the position where you have to say that you have to give them back to the same concessionaires or to other concessionaires, so long as it is shared and shared alike, no member of this House will be against you. But we have to wait Government's pronouncement on this matter.

Now, you would have thought in a crisis like that - we must admit that it is a crisis - that particularly the Minister whose responsibility it is would be in a position to say: "such are the facts; this is what the Government proposes to do." No hint, no outline, no policy, no promise of one thing or the other, have we got from him. Can it be even at this time with this colossal loss accumulating over the years, that there is not sufficient political courage left amongst the hon. members opposite to make them take a stand on this matter? How can you ask the House in fairness to this Report to empower the Board to borrow money with Government's guarantee? Are you not asking the House to continue to underwrite the Transport Board? Logically, the clear purpose of this Bill if passed would be to tie the Transport Board to the Governor-in-Executive Committee, because once you let it be known both to the lenders and the operators that the Governor-in-Executive Committee guarantees the loan which the Transport Board wishes, well then, the loans would be met with the view that nothing needs to be done to bring the service of the Transport Board on a proper footing. What Government could encourage that state of affairs?

Here, Mr. Speaker, in a cross debate when sponsoring the Bill - it was then the present Minister of Industry and Labour in the course of his sponsoring the Bill who had to answer certain criticisms made on the principle of the motion by the hon. junior member for Christ Church. Now, in that debate, I was on the Minister's side because I supported their motion in principle, provided that certain methods be adopted. But in answering the hon. junior member for Christ Church, the then sponsor of the Bill said among other things this, and it is here on page 1431 of the debate of 18th August, 1955: "The hon. junior member for Christ Church will also remember that the counter proposal which the bus owners put up, would involve the Government in a financial undertaking to the tune of approximately \$310,000 per annum. Their proposal was that they would renew their concession for three years with the understanding that we would give them the 50% rebate of gasoline. You can understand that that would be impossible. And in addition to this the Government to pay any increased wages recommended by the Labour Commissioner."

In other words, Government said then that we cannot take the concessionaires' word for it because what they want would cost us \$310,000 per annum. That is for the whole island. Now, suppose it is forgotten that the Government did not take over all the buses. Suppose it was that they took over all the buses. Do you realise what they would have thrown away and what the operational losses would be? But even let us suppose that the operational losses were the same as they are now. Do you realise what they have thrown away over the past four years, added up, would be more than \$310,000 multiplied by four? They refused to grant the bus concessionaires what they wanted. They took over the buses from them and they find themselves now in the position where they have thrown away much more than four times the annual amount which they said it would cost them then.

I am not quoting this as any reproach to the Government because you cannot foresee the future, and I am willing to accept any explanation on the part of the Minister that he spoke to the best of his knowledge and the facts at his disposal then. I am only saying this: now that the difference between what you have lost for four years and what you would have given the concessionaires is so much, I question: "Is it not time to re-evaluate your whole policy and decide on giving back the buses?"

I have heard it said in this Chamber - I do not know it myself - that a large number of the diesel buses are now very unserviceable. We have not had the Leyland buses for more than three years as far as I remember. If they have proven unserviceable, do you think it wise, Mr. Speaker, to commit the Treasury to another \$3/4 million which would end up down the drain in two and a half or three years' time? What is at stake is not only the future of the Transport Board or of transport in this island; what is at stake in this measure and the circumstances in which we find

ourselves is the reputation of this Government as a sane body, and the reputation of this Honourable House as a Legislature. I say this, Mr. Speaker, turn it and twist it as you like, put the most favourable construction on this matter; you cannot escape the conclusion that the Board has not run its service properly. I do not want to score a debating point by saying that the Minister said that when the new Managing Director came he, like the Messiah, would teach us all things. I would be decent enough and fair enough not to throw it in his dish. But, Mr. Speaker, we are asked to justify the continuous support of the Transport Board, and in being asked to justify it, we are putting ourselves in an impossible position and that is why I say that the integrity and the reputation of the House of Assembly is at stake. It has never happened in this island before that the House of Assembly pledged itself to underwrite the financial affairs of any Statutory Board.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair.
3.25 p.m.

Mr. TUDOR: The Government means that this House will continually be asked to underwrite the financial transactions of a Statutory Board. We have never approved anything with respect to the Natural Gas Corporation; we have not approved any such thing with respect to the Tourist or Development Board. If, this afternoon, we had been told by the Government that they would underwrite the Transport Board dollar for dollar, we would be happier because we would understand that the onus is being placed on them to find one half of these funds; but we are asked to meet the whole hog. The Legislature is being committed to meet the whole hog in perpetuity because one Minister of the Government is so stubborn and, apparently, he is so strong that neither the Premier, who heads the Government, nor the majority of his colleagues, can find it possible to bring him to reason. I understand that the Minister has threatened his colleagues that if they persist in reversing the policy of giving away the buses, then he will resign. I may be wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I cannot think that the resignation of the Minister would be such a disaster to the people of this island, and I would counsel the Hon. Premier if he is hesitating at all about accepting the resignation of that Minister, he can accept it with good grace. In that case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we shall continue to live as if nothing had happened; but the whole Government as such, is committed.

What guarantee, what assurance, is going out to the public of Barbados from this Hon. Chamber, that things will be better in the future than they are now? Will they be better in the future? Let us take the Balance Sheets again; they are all here and you will notice that in the items, or in the accounts, the money which has been spent on repairing buses, the cost of maintenance and up-keep is increasing from year to year; and that, in spite of that, they were putting a supply of "Leylands" and "Mercedes Benz". Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you want to tell me that that cost is suddenly going to be decreased because you tell the Board that it will be able to borrow money from Barclay's Bank which you will guarantee? Hon. members should wake up; this is a matter of political conscience. No matter how much you like the idea of public ownership in principle, or how much you feel that a public utility should be publicly owned and publicly administered, there comes a point when the public welfare itself requires that you should get rid of the public utility if that public utility is costing the public welfare too much, if the cost of maintenance and up-keep is increasing year by year and if the cost of depreciation increases year by year. Up to now, the Government cannot say with certainty that it is collecting every possible amount of revenue it can collect. I know that it is customary among the apologists for the Board to throw blame on the workers and to say that the conductors and conductresses are such a worthless and indifferent bunch of people that they want their money in the bottle and in the jug too; that they are asking for higher wages and at the same time they are not being honest with their employers. (Mr. STRAUGHN: Who says that?) That is what is being said and what has been said by hon. members on the other side. (Mr. STRAUGHN: Who said that?) All of them said it.

You would have to have the stomach of a cow in order to be able to say things like that when you well know the true facts. I am not saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a conductor employed by the Transport Board or by a private concessionaire may not, at some time or other, or even from time to time, make his hands free with the money which he is handling. (*Laughter.*) That is possible. I do not know that it is desirable, even in a baker shop, to make regulations that a baker should not eat a loaf of the bread which he is kneading, and I believe that some bakers would eat from the time that they began to mix the dough until when it came out of the oven. (*Laughter.*) However, commonsense tells you that no man who owns a bakery, to continue the metaphor, would ascribe his losses entirely to the fact that the bakers were eating a loaf of bread or two every night; and even if the conductors were stealing, that alone could not be responsible for the operational losses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are two ways in which you can try to make that position more secure. One is by giving these employees the wages which you feel it is proper for them to have and, in addition to that, by introducing all of the systems of money-collecting which will be up to date and which will guarantee at least 80% efficiency. When we ignore as being worthless the charge that the losses are due to the amount of stealing which goes on, we are left with the bald, inescapable fact, without in any way wishing to appoint any blame to the officials, that it is a question of the total lack of efficiency in the day-to-day operation of the Board. I know that when I say these things the Ministers are always ready to jump down on me, but they never issue any denials of what I say.

I understand that during some time last year there were three big bus excursions which took place - one at St. Barnabas, one at St. Albans and one other; and these services are what are called chartered services.
3.35 p.m.

They were big excursions; and so careless were the arrangements for these excursions executed that very little, if any, of the money for those buses came back into the Board's accounts. In other words, whoever was responsible for the renting of the buses did not make himself equally responsible for seeing that the Board got its money. That is what I have been told. If a thing like that is true, it is a serious thing; yet we have not heard that anybody has been disciplined or prosecuted. When those things go on and they are cloaked up and are yet known, public confidence in the management of the Board must sink, and inside the Board itself, I mean inside its office, when this happens and goes unpunished, people then begin to keep secrets for one another, and because they know that they themselves may have been guilty of some misdemeanour, they cannot exercise proper discipline on their colleagues or subordinates when they themselves are guilty. So it happens then that my misdemeanour, being cloaked up, encourages and incites yours; and yours, being cloaked up, encourages and incites this sort of thing, and before you know where you are, there is a run of inefficient workmanship and dishonest manoeuvring going on which is not punished and brought to light, and which when added up brings great harm to the proper management of the Board itself.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, an hon. member would be failing in his public duty if he did not speak as strongly on this matter as I do now. From my point of view, this thing has even gone past political controversy. Have you not noticed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Transport Board is in such a mess that anything it does, no matter what it is, is always done wrong? In principle it is a good thing, for instance, that school children should have their own buses to travel by to take them to and from school; but Mr. Deputy Speaker, can you imagine a situation like this where you do not own all of the transport of the island, where the schools are so situated that there is no sort of relation between where people live and where the schools are, in a situation thirdly where you have not got enough buses to take care of the ordinary travelling public, with these three requirements being absent, you could insist that children should travel by certain buses at certain times?

Obviously you cannot, and what is the consequence of it? Any afternoon probably about this time you can go out into the bus terminus and see if you do not see hundreds of children waiting there and being told that they cannot get on to buses to get home because the big people are travelling; they have missed their own buses. Who was the half-wit who when he advised that did not know that some part of the after school period would overlap into the after work period and make proper provision accordingly? Consequently the Board set out to please parents but has ended up by angering them. That is a matter of administration, but I use it to show that no matter what the Board does, it does it wrongly and it does not seem to get the effect it wants. If those were all one had to complain about, we should hope that time and forbearance would put them right, and we would be patient enough to wait on the Board until it had got its house in order; but those are not all. What is wrong is that there has not been devised up to now any proper method of financing the Board.

I told you in 1955 not to set up this Board unless you gave it \$1 million or \$2 million, enabling it to issue its own stock and bonds which the public could take up, which you yourself could buy some of and which you could guarantee. I told you that you should make the Board understand from the outset that it is entirely on its own and that it must not think it can lean on the Treasury when it gets into difficulty. If you let it lean on the Treasury it would not develop self-reliance. That advice was never taken. Ever so often you came in here - on nine separate occasions - for money, some to meet the operational losses, some to purchase buses from the concessionaires, and the biggest amount, \$625,000 I believe, to buy new buses. Another \$1 1/4 million and it would have been about \$2 million we have disbursed by giving our sanction, and we see nothing for it. Might we not have given them that \$2 million from the beginning and set them on their own with proper supervision, with proper administration between them and the Cabinet, but with a stern warning that they must discharge that duty as a public trust? They have done nothing like that, and now having already given them \$2 million we are being asked to give them unlimited credit now. That is the essence of this Bill, and you are giving them unlimited credit in face of the losses accruing over the years.

I say to the Cabinet that this is a serious state of affairs. You can count on the sympathy of the people of this island if you are prepared to admit that you have made a mistake; you could count on the sympathy of the people of this island if you had genuinely made an attempt to straighten up the affairs of the Board when it was first pointed out to you that it needed straightening out; but after four terrible years with a situation still the same you cannot expect the sympathy of the people now. You must find some way of getting out of your difficulty which does not put the people further in.

One last point, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It was announced in the London newspaper that new buses have been ordered for the Transport Board. It was announced by the Minister in this House that new buses have not been ordered for the Transport Board. Now there are a lot of things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that would take swallowing. Tell me if you believe this: do you believe first of all that a reputable company like the Leyland Motor Bus Company of Great Britain would let it be known that they were sending buses to the Transport Board of Barbados if in fact no such buses were ordered? If you believe a Company like that would do that, you would believe anything, and I say that without offence. If you believe they would say that buses were coming here if these buses had not been ordered, there is no limit to what you believe.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have already told the House that a representative of Leyland was here up to Monday and denied that Leyland ever said that.

Mr. TUDOR: Naturally being here he must deny that Leyland ever said that. Why should he say something to put the Minister in difficulty? He would be very foolish to do so. If I were he I would also deny it, because if I did not deny it and the Board cancelled the order I would lose my com-

mission as salesman; but we shall know when we hear that buses have come and when the House is asked to underwrite the money for them. We will hear it was a terrible mistake, they did not mean to do it, but nevertheless the buses are here and they must be paid for.
3.45 p.m.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they want the House to give them power to borrow, but to borrow what? The first thing which is needed to put the Transport Board on its feet, even supposing anybody lends them money is sufficient money to reimburse the Treasury and to pay the interest charges on the last four years for the sums we have advanced. That is the first thing which is needed and then we will have to give them something for its future operations. Can you imagine in the present state of affairs of this Board anybody lending it anything? Can you imagine anybody lending the Transport Board anything when its buses are rapidly deteriorating and lending it anything on the building which they have now and which cost less than \$50,000 to put down? On what then could you lend them anything? The only guarantee is the willingness of the taxpayers of this island to meet the Board's commitments from year to year; therefore, you are asking the taxpayers to pay increased fares as members of the travelling public and then asking the same people to meet the Board's commitments in their business. Is that the only alternative? I suggest that there is another. The other alternative is to say that the time has come to call a halt to this thing and to end it on terms which are more advantageous for the people of this island.

Mr. STRAUGHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would say that if we were to take the last sentence of the hon. member's speech who has just sat down, who talked about ending the Transport Board in a manner which is more advantageous to the people of this island, one would still have to ask the hon. member what does he seriously regard as the manner which is more advantageous because it is rather interesting to note that even after the dictation of the hon. member, which was certainly good in manner, I am not quite sure whether he can establish the position where he and his Party stand at this particular time on this matter.

I remember, Sir, that a debate on the Transport Board was the first major debate I heard in this House since I became a member. I did not take part in the debate then because I thought it best to listen and hear all the arguments. I remember after the debate, the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked me outside what I thought of the debate and he also gave the suggestion that the Transport Board would certainly have to decide to have all the buses or none. I would say that to some extent he repeated himself today when he made his contribution to the debate. If the Hon. Leader of the Opposition gives the impression that we should have all of the buses or none to be run by the Transport Board, exactly what impression does his colleague, the hon. senior member for St. Lucy, intend to convey? Is he saying that we should have none at all and did I get him right that the Transport Board should have none of the buses to run and that the Government should give them back to the concessionaires? I do not know if I got him right.

Mr. TUDOR: If the hon. member would give way, what I said was quite clear and that is this. If the Government found itself in a state of crisis and cannot find its way out, it will have to make a decision as to how to end it.

Mr. STRAUGHN: Has the Government told us today that it cannot find its way out? Certainly, financially speaking, all is not well with the Transport Board, but I have not heard anybody saying that they cannot find their way out. As a matter of fact, the hon. senior member for St. Lucy said something else. He said that all it needs is a little political courage for the Government to decide to wind up the Transport Board.

Mr. TUDOR: If the hon. member would give way again, what I said was that, if that is their decision, all it needs is political courage to say so.

Mr. STRAUGHN: I think it takes more political courage to bring this particular Bill to enable the Transport Board to do what they should have done before and to give them a chance to see if they can stand on their feet. I think the hon. senior member for St. Lucy in his discourse talked of finance and I think some of what he said would bear examination. Some of what he said was certainly worthwhile when he talked of making sure that the Board stands on its feet and making the people there do their work in the best possible manner. I wonder if at that time when the buses were taken over he would say that people of the general public would invest in shares in companies like that unless this Government was interested in it. Is he seriously suggesting that people would want to become owners of the Transport Board either at the time it was taken over or even now when the finances of the Board are in a bad shape? Would he say then or now that people would want to invest in the Transport Board as it was then in the dilapidated state, or in the state it is in now struggling for finance? Is he seriously, soberly and conscientiously suggesting that? I am quite certain that the hon. member with his skill of debate and knowledge of finance must at least grant us that much consideration to feel that he cannot ask the general public to contribute and to become shareholders in a company which has no guarantee or collateral of its own. That was the case when the Government took over the buses and that is the case now.

The hon. senior member for St. Lucy, I believe, is the only speaker whom I heard today who reminded us most forcibly that we are dealing with a Bill and discussing the principle of a Bill which amends the Transport Board Act. Certainly, I was very impressed when he said that we are exactly dealing with a Bill which has as its principle to grant the Transport Board the right to have its own auditors. The Minister explained when he was pursuing that point that it was the correct thing to do; yet the hon. member is criticising the Government for bringing it now. If it is right that the Board should have its own auditors, then this is one of the times when you should amend the Act to do so because this is the time that you are giving the Board permission to borrow money.

The hon. member also said that we were not necessarily going into the matter of a supplementary Resolution for the Transport Board; nevertheless, I think it is a good thing that the Government should have the Statement of Accounts of the Transport Board circulated at this time, because after all, it is our business. I will go on a little further. One other remark made by another speaker was to the effect that we must understand that this is public business and that it is something which the public would be very interested in and concerned about. Because of that, I certainly will dwell for a little while on that aspect of the matter. I notice that the hon. senior member for St. Lucy has not attempted to challenge me on those remarks which I just made: so I take it that even if he does not agree with me he does not believe it is worthwhile to reply to me.

3.55 p.m.

The principle of this Bill.....

Mr. TUDOR: On a point of order, if the hon. member would give way. He appears to accuse me of wanting people to become shareholders of the Board with a Government guarantee. That is not my position. If the hon. member reads the Speech which I made in 1955, he will see that I said then that they should adopt the method used in Great Britain with the setting up of the Transport Commission, where the Commission itself would issue its own stock with a Government guarantee.

Mr. STRAUGHN: Well, the Government is guaranteeing something to the Board. Again I must say that when hon. members bandy these losses of the Transport Board about and then talk about using some of the methods which were used by the British Transport Commission and the London Transport Executive, I do not think that any of them could ever say that the London Transport itself is self supporting. I am quite certain that anybody who has made any investigation into the matter, knows that the transport service is not such a money-making venture and the London Transport itself has to be subsidised.

Mr. Speaker, passing on to the administration, I am certain that there is not a single member of this House or of the public who would say, and I am certain that it would not be the Government's wish to say at this moment, that the Transport Board is the most efficiently administered organisation in this island. Obviously, there have been lapses in administration, but if you come down with a Bill dealing with policy, and the object of the Bill is to enable the Board to borrow money with a Government guarantee, that is the principle which we must debate now. We do agree that the aspects of the administration of the Board should be scrutinised; but one must distinguish between whether you are talking about a particular phase of the administration or of the particular policy with which the Bill deals. All this Bill says is that the Transport Board should be enabled to raise a loan with a Government guarantee.

It has been mentioned by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and supported by the hon. junior member for Christ Church, that if the Government is raising a loan, then it should tell us how much the amount will be; but the Board cannot get a particular loan or any particular amount unless the matter passes through this Chamber. If you agree in principle with this loan, you will still have the opportunity of speaking about the details and be able to say: "We do not think that this particular loan should be guaranteed."

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to go to the remarks made by the hon. junior member for Christ Church, and I would certainly like him to be listening to me because if, at any time, I misquote him or interpret what he has said in a manner in which he does not mean it to be interpreted, I would certainly like it to be corrected. However, the hon. member did say, from the notes which I have, that the Transport Board cannot make good under the present set-up. He went on further and said what is worse and more tragic, that the Minister cannot at this moment guarantee us a better picture. Of course, I would still have to be enlightened as to what the hon. member meant when he said "under the present set-up". If he is talking about administrative defects with the Board, then we accept that; but if he means that the Transport Board should be a Government body but not under the present Government, perhaps it could also be interpreted in that way. What does he mean by the words "under the present set-up"? He may mean that the Transport Board should not be a Statutory Board at all and that the transport should go back to private concessionaires. If you make a statement like that it is certainly open to many interpretations.

When I compare the speech of the hon. junior member for Christ Church with that of his colleague, I cannot see what is their reaction to this particular Bill. One is entitled to feel that the statement that the Transport Board cannot make good under the present set-up may be interpreted in more ways than one. The words "efficient transport" were also used. Again that is a question which must be examined. What do you really mean by "efficient transport"? Do you mean a transport service which could show you a credit account and financial accounts that a grocery or a food fair would be showing you? And do you mean, in relation to proper administration, that which would guarantee that you do not have any unreasonable expenditure and unreasonable losses - I use these words advisedly - and you could show that you are still providing the travelling public with adequate means of transport? I wonder if that is what the hon. member meant. He also went on to say that it is a strange thing that the private concessionaries seem to be able to get more work out of their employees with less effort and presumably for less money; but is that his concept of an efficient transport? Must we, as a Labour Government, subscribe to the idea that there would be such a situation that you would be able to get a greater amount of work done for hardly any money? Must we subscribe to those conditions of labour?

4.05 p.m.

Is he suggesting that that is the contribution we should be making for more efficient transport? You see, these blank phrases are all very well in themselves and make good headline news, but they can be broken down and critically examined by any person who wants to examine them in the

course of debate or in other discussions, and they might be good political slogans; "Government loses tremendous amounts of money in Transport while private concessionaires profit".

The Minister said that the question of Government policy is undergoing very serious and scrutinising review, and we would be certainly waiting to hear the final decision as far as Government policy on the matter is concerned; but even without any change or without any further statement on Government policy, we can still take the present situation and ask, do you mean that you must subscribe to guarantee efficient transport by the methods which it has been suggested are used by private concessionaires?

Mr. GODDARD: On a point of order, I have never suggested that, Sir. Those words were taken from the Minister's speech, but if efficiency means getting more out of a person with less effort, I subscribe to that; but that is efficiency - less effort, more production.

Mr. STRAUGHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that there are a number of points on which I might be able to agree with the hon. junior member for Christ Church. Perhaps in a discussion on productivity we might agree as to how to define productivity and getting the most out of any equivalent you have for less effort in the least possible time, but when one uses it as an argument to buttress the claims of private concessionaires versus the particular situation now of the Transport Board being a Statutory body, it could not be interpreted to mean anything else but that you subscribe to the conditions which would probably be below the standard which any open-minded Labour organisation should be willing to accept. The hon. member went on to say that if the situation is that there are poor working conditions - and he throws it back on the Minister of Trade - it is for him to handle the trade; but it is also the duty of the Minister of Transport to see that the Transport Board gives proper working conditions as well. Do not use one line of argument and then be unwilling to accept it when the situation faces you in the line of the Transport Board. You cannot do that.

I would say, Sir, that we would share the concern about productivity even if you want to use the word "efficiency" on behalf of the attitude and morale of the workers in the Transport Board, because as has been pointed out by somebody else in the debate today about workers' morale anybody who has any experience at all in industrial relations will say that it can have a great effect on what your productivity or efficiency would be. I am in favour of using this phrase and people may say that I use it too often, but we must be brave enough to face the dangerous situation in our island today in which people get the feeling that productivity or a proper attitude towards work or conscientiousness in a job really perhaps does not matter, and I would say that some of the very critics of Government have helped in very many ways to contribute to this kind of attitude and lack of proper conscientiousness and morale, and I would point it out. Do you know that people criticise the way the people of the Transport Board work now and I have done so myself? The way certain of them carry on their work is just a reflection of a state which is right now prevailing in this island. It is the same kind of attitude that people adopt when they may get houses from the Housing Authority and would make no effort, although they have borrowed, to pay back; they say they would not pay back the loan or think about it or consider it. It is the same attitude of not paying any particular interest in what you have to do, because it does not matter.

Do you know that there have been politicians and unfortunately even members of this Chamber who have actually - talking about houses - told people you can borrow money, but you do not have to make an effort to pay back? There are politicians again in the Local Government who would say "Oh, well, I will go to gaol; I am not worrying to pay my taxes", even though they pay, and hope that others will not pay just to get people in trouble and embarrass Government. When you have an attitude like that - and I am sorry the hon. senior member for St. Lucy is out of his place. Though you cannot say he individually preaches it,

you can bring documentary evidence that certainly members of his Party have preached it on many occasions; so if that is the attitude you preach, then you must understand that that particular attitude does not stop in the line of Local Government, because in the Civil Service it would go through anything that is being done; and unless people take their responsibility seriously and understand that it is the duty of every responsible person in the island, be he politician, administrator or whatever he might be, to instruct and guide people, that the more conscientiousness and productivity and energy they put in an operation, the better in the end would be the output of that organisation, we would be in a very sad state of affairs, and our last state would be worse than the first. That is not particularly the Barbados Labour Government's problem, because when you preach an attitude like that, whoever becomes the Government has the same thing in their hands - inefficiency, lack of interest and poor administration. In this we all agree that we must be interested, and I am certain that the members of the Cabinet would know that I keep preaching that our big problem in Barbados today is administration even more than policy, because for the policy that we have laid down in our Party in general for development or for running anything, we can say that we have not been shown any better or improved policy by any other Party. We also know that public administration and business administration have now become so large that there are things that need to be stated particularly and given serious study to, and I think our Government recognises that like anybody else, and we would not attempt to defend the Transport Board and say it is being properly or efficiently administered.

It must be known that there must be an improvement in the administration of the Transport Board, but then the question still is your final policy. I think I can gather from the remarks of the hon. junior member for Christ Church that his Party would be in favour of giving the buses back to private concessionaires. I cannot say I have gathered that from the members of the other Party who have spoken, but they have said that if the Government feels they want to give them back, well, take political courage and do it. Do they subscribe to the idea that you should throw them back to private concessionaires without trying to give some sort of encouragement and support to the Bill that is before us? 4.15 p.m.

The Bill which is now before us only says that the Transport Board must be entitled to borrow money. The hon. senior member for St. Lucy said that is just another way of saying that the Government is going to underwrite the losses of the Transport Board forever. I must say that I have to disagree with that interpretation because what this Government or any other Government would have to decide is whether this is something which they believe in or whether they want to continue this public ownership of Transport. I believe a lot of good arguments can be adduced as regards that, but I think when Government brings in that policy that that is the time when we should debate that question; therefore, I do not think I need to dilate on that at this time, and although some hon. members have spoken as if they want it to be the policy of the Government, I do not think we should dilate on that now. There can be a lot of arguments one way or the other as to what should be done with it. The administration has to be looked into as well as the finances and this and that. Although we cannot tell what the hon. senior member for St. Lucy would do as regards that aspect of the matter, I am sure he cannot say that what the Government is doing now is not a good effort and one which can possibly give the Board a chance to show that it can stand on its own feet.

There is just another thing which I think I should only refer to casually. The hon. member did say in making a comment that the public is asked to underwrite the Transport Board forever and they are not doing it with the Tourist Board. He said that if the Government came down with a Bill saying that they would guarantee the Transport Board a dollar for dollar, he would agree with it. That shows that the hon. member is a bit anachronistic. When I saw the principle of the Tourist Board Bill, one of the clauses said that the Government would put up a certain amount of money and that the Government would give some more on the basis of matching every dollar which the Tourist Board

put up by another dollar; that particular Clause has been repealed since. In other words, Government does not now underwrite the Tourist Board by putting up a dollar for every dollar they put up. Even in a lucrative business like tourism, the Tourist Board has found out that they cannot match the Government on a dollar for dollar basis; so they had to petition the Government and state that they would like the Government to guarantee them a sum of money. In other words, they asked the Government to put up the balance of money which was intended to be put up on a dollar for dollar basis. That has happened to the Tourist Board and in a thing like tourism which is a much easier thing to handle than the Transport Board and of which the financial returns are easier to grasp.

How then can the hon. member say that we agreed with what you did with the Tourist Board and then ask, are you going to do it with the Transport Board? Surely, you cannot use two opposite arguments on the same principle. Just as Government has now given a guarantee for the Tourist Board, Government is now saying that in order that Government should not be taking money out of the Treasury to run the Transport Board, in order to throw the onus on the Transport Board, it is giving them the power to raise the loans. The Government has said that this is a bold effort which they are making with regard to the Transport Board. Government is giving the Board the chance to borrow money in order to see if that Board can show any fitness of putting themselves in order. I do not think the expert there can do all things in one day; he is only human. It is true to say that the administration of the Transport Board was so bad when he took over that anybody who examined it would have to make some improvement. Let us make sure that we give them at least a chance to show if they can do a better job by agreeing to this Bill. That is my contribution to the debate.

Finally, I would say that I am sorry that the Hon. Minister could not get hold of the debates which the hon. senior member for St. Lucy was reading. I do not know if he read everything, but that is just on the facetious side. I say that we must come down on the principle in this particular Bill because by it you are saying that you want to show that you are making a reasonable effort to assist in the finances of the Transport Board. Whether the Transport Board should be privately or publicly owned is a matter on which you can spend a lot of time speaking; but I say that this is not the time for that. If hon. members take this opportunity of going all around that, I am sure that except for the remarks of the hon. senior member for St. George, no other hon. member in his pronouncement said to let Government give the buses up. That is something for Government to consider in the future. Let us see now that the Transport Board is given the opportunity to borrow and then see if they can give a clear and good account of their stewardship.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems to me that both from the point of view of history and of convenience in the future, debate on this matter might conveniently be divided into two parts - the period before the hon. junior member for St. Joseph became a member of this House and the period after he became a member of this House. In other words, what has happened to transport before Straughn and what has happened after Straughn. The hon. junior member for St. Joseph speaks very glibly of the time before he became a member of the House and what happened after he became a member; so this serious problem may be very well resolved if we divide it into these two historical periods and then leave the intention to be resolved by him at some future period.

Before I go on to the main issue before us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to inform that side of the House that when they denied the statement that the Barbados Transport Board has actually ordered buses from Leyland, they are actually accusing the British Government of disseminating false information.

Mr. STRAUGHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am certain the hon. member will inform

us how comes that statement. In other words, how come the Minister saying that the buses have not been ordered would be accusing the British Government of disseminating false information?

4.25 p.m.

Mr. CRAWFORD: The hon. member need not anticipate me; I intend to give him all the information he wants. The statement which has twice appeared in the West Indian Press within recent weeks, that the Barbados Government has ordered a fleet of buses from Leyland, has been disseminated by the United Kingdom Information Office in the West Indies; that is a branch of the British Ministry of Information, which is under the control of the British Minister of Information, who is a British Cabinet Minister. Therefore, when you say that it is not true that these buses have been ordered from Leyland, you are accusing the British Government of disseminating false information.

Mr. STRAUGHN: On a point of order. I know that the United Kingdom Information Office quoted this report; but is the hon. member saying that they cannot be wrong in getting information as well?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member clearly does not understand what I am saying. I am saying that he is accusing them of disseminating false information; I submit that that is tantamount to saying that you cannot rely on what the British Ministry says or does.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Can the hon. member tell us then what is keeping back these buses? Why are they not here already?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I am not concerned with whether he has ordered the buses or not; all I am saying is that the statement has been disseminated by what is regarded as a most reliable source of information; that is, the British Government itself. If they are saying that what the British Government says is not true, then we cannot in future believe anything that is said by the British Government. If this information which is sent out to the Information Office in Trinidad is incorrect, then they can send out wrong information on anything. We are not so silly as to believe that the mere statement that these buses have not been ordered is one hundred per cent correct. I want to ask the Minister if the Transport Board has not sent out specifications of the buses which they want to Leylands; I want to ask him if the buses are not there ready for shipment now. (ASIDES.) The hon. member has asked if they have been shipped. Well, Sir, I am not a steamship agent or a commission agent, but I know that the buses are ready for shipment. I know that they have been already built to the specifications required by the Transport Board and therefore it is passing strange that the Transport Board knows nothing about the order; but the British Government knows that the buses have been ordered and it says that they have been ordered. The buses have been built to the specifications required and they are there ready for shipment. All of this has been done without any previous knowledge, either of the Transport Board or of the Barbados Government! That is a peculiar state of affairs. Let me say in passing that I could not more fundamentally disagree with the allegations of the hon. junior member for St. Joseph that this country is lacking in efficient administration. That is a slur on the Civil Servants which, under the existing conditions, I could never endorse.

Mr. STRAUGHN: On a point of order. I will repeat the remarks which I made for the benefit of the hon. member. (Mr. CRAWFORD: I heard them perfectly well.) Well, apparently, the hon. member needs to go to a Specialist. I said that our problem in Barbados is not so much one of policy as of bad administration and I went on to show that Government administration and business administration have grown that big that it needs a specialised study. That is one of the things under which the Government is labouring; that is not the same thing as saying that we have inefficient administration. In the West Indies I still think that we have most efficient Civil Servants, even although I think that there is room for improvement.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Never have I heard that in all my life. His Government is suffering from maladministration...

Mr. STRAUGHN: On a point of order. The word "maladministration" did not come from my mouth.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Well, let the hon. member explain what he means. It means inefficient administration.

Mr. STRAUGHN: We will always have this trouble with the hon. member. The trouble is not so much that of policy but of administration. I do not know if the hon. member understands what is a sinister connotation.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Apparently that is the only thing he understands; it is a pity that he does not understand anything more. Your policy is perfect but the administration has grown; if the administration has grown, therefore it is a problem and, so far as we understand administration in this country - I do not know what it is in the place whence the hon. member has come, perhaps Your Honour can tell him what it is in St. Joseph - but administration in this context, as the hon. senior member for St. Peter would say, is every-day conduct; and while it has grown, it is no problem in Barbados. We have a highly efficient administration and, in our opinion, this colony is not suffering from the lack of administration at all; if we did not have a proper administration, then the Government would have collapsed long ago. I am submitting that the only other country in the world, which has ever had a more efficient administration than this country has at the moment, is the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

4.35 p.m.

Even after the monarchy of the Hapsburg Regime, the Austro-Hungarian Civil servants kept the country running for a number of years; and in this country, Sir, if - thanks be to Heaven - we did not have efficient administration, I wonder where we would have been in the last five or six years. It is true that in the lower brackets of the Civil Service there is a certain amount of inefficiency and irresponsibility and what not, and this of course would have to be remedied as time goes on; but in the higher brackets up to now we have been fortunate. And the hon. junior member for St. Joseph out of the depth of his innocence, perhaps, of what is happening in this country can afford to make these unjustifiable criticisms of the administration. But I can assure him that even a few minutes' chat with anybody who knows it would reveal a state of affairs that he himself would be surprised at. He says that the Government so far has a policy but lacks administration. What policy have they got with regard to the Transport Board?

Initiating this debate the Minister himself said they had no policy; he said he has not been able to state policy as yet; he does not know whether there will be a continuation of the present state of affairs or an extension or retraction or something akin to what we had before. In other words, the Minister of Government with two or three years' practical daily experience with the running of the Transport Board and with day-to-day association with the Transport Board should know every detail; but the Minister comes here and says they have no policy! neither he himself nor any of his colleagues know whether they are going to expand the present public ownership, whether they are going to retract it or revert to what they had before, but he expects the geniuses on this side of the table, the member for Christ Church and ourselves to come here without their knowledge and information and tell them what to do. He is crazy.

We have our opinion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to what should be done in this present state of affairs; but, after all, surely the ball is at their feet. They are actually coming here with a Bill to ask us to give the Transport Board *carte blanche* to our money subject to their guarantee. They do not know if they are going to retract the service, they do not know if they are going to extend it, but they are asking us to agree to a blank cheque. That is what we are doing: because if we pass this Bill today the Transport Board can borrow all it wants on the say-so of the Government without any subsequent reference to the Legislature

at all; so we are giving the Transport Board through them a completely blank cheque to borrow money and do as they like; and in the face of that he has the brass and the amazing gall to come in here and attempt to criticise members on this side of the House for not stating a precise policy in this matter. I have not heard anything more brazen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, outside of the walls of the Mental Hospital. Surely, if the Government feels that the Transport Board should have the power to borrow money, it means it feels that the Transport Board is a highly responsible body, it is a body capable of conducting its affairs in an efficient manner, and it is a body capable of being entrusted almost with the decision to make a policy for the Government itself.

To begin with, the member for St. Joseph who is not in his seat began by saying that nobody on this side of the table in the Opposition Parties had stated clearly and concisely what was the position with regard to the future of the Transport Board. That was not only brazen effrontery but an unpardonable distortion of the facts, because the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition in opening this debate today made it perfectly clear, speaking both for himself and his Party, that we were not opposed to the principle of the Bill, but certainly we wanted some commitment from the Government as to its future policy. If you ask us to support this Bill today and let the Transport Board borrow the money it requires, at least you should tell us what is the programme in so far as Government is concerned for the future transport of the country. You should state whether you are going to expand it, whether you will take over the entire bus service of the island which we have always advocated, or state whether you are going to retract public ownership, or whether you intend, as the Minister has said, to revert possibly to the state we had before which would mean that there was no publicly owned transport and when all the buses.....

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, the hon. member so worded that as if I have advocated it.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not suggesting that; I am only quoting him and I hope I quote him accurately. It does not interest me whether he advocates it or not, but at any rate he has admitted it is under their consideration. It is a tremendous statement to make because he says they have no policy in the matter yet. They do not know whether they are going to expand, retract, or, says he - and he could never have made this statement if it was not under discussion with his colleagues - whether they would revert to something akin to what they had before. What does that mean? That is tantamount to saying they have not decided whether they are going to give back the buses. If he is frank and candid enough to admit that is the only interpretation of what he has said, he can go on. Only a lunatic would suggest that there are alternatives to those he himself posed, to retract, extend or revert to what we had before. There are only three alternatives, because the people of this country must be transported.

So far as as we are concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all we on this side of the table are called upon to do is to say whether or not we support the Bill before the House, and therefore the hon. junior member for St. Joseph is certainly either amusing himself, trying to present an inaccurate position, or talking merely to hear himself talk when he says that none of us has made it clear what is our position in the matter. We in the Opposition have made it clearer than the Government, because on the face of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this matter the Government is doing only one single thing - pussy-footing.

4.45 p.m.

If that is not pussy-footing, I do not know what is. If you do not know what your policy is, consider the *status quo*. If you give them power to borrow money, they are not going to borrow money to buy potatoes and onions; they are going to borrow money to buy buses. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition could not be more right when he said that before the Government asked the Legislature to support

this measure, they should be in a position to say what their policy is. Come and tell the Legislature that you want so much to be expended by this Board. You come and tell us to give you a blank cheque without knowing what your policy is. You are committing yourself definitely to public ownership in the sense that you are going to spend more money on acquiring new units.

Now, this Transport Board has lost a lot of money. The hon. senior member for St. Lucy quoted the figure as around \$2 million, but it is more than \$2 million today. Of course, he was quite correct when he said over \$2 million. From the figures we have before us, the actual operational losses plus the advances made by the Government for one reason or the other do mean that we have subsidised public transport over the last four or five years to the tune of more than \$2 million.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us also face up to the fact that it has taken a lot of juggling to get these figures to the Legislature. When you say that the Statement of Accounts was signed by a chartered accountant, let me remind you that he can only submit a statement on the figures submitted to him. He cannot say whether the figures are correct or not. Do you think he can vouch for the authenticity of the expenditure under a given Head? Therefore, I say without fear of contradiction that it has taken a great amount of juggling to get these losses down to the present figures. In other words, the public will never know exactly what has been the cost of operating this Board, and the trouble is that we see no prospect of recouping ourselves in the present or immediate future. As a matter of fact, it is to the contrary because it appears that we are going to lose more money. It was a question of fools madly rushing where angels fear to tread when the Government agreed to take over these buses. The concessionaires wanted one cent increase in bus fares in order to provide a service to a certain standard required by the Government and to replace their old units and what not. They were not given a cent and the buses were taken over; and in addition to subsidising them, the public has had to pay increased fares over what the concessionaires originally asked for; and unless we are to sink more, the Government will have to again agree to the payment of increased fares by the travelling public.

I defy anybody from the other side of the Table to get up here and say that to provide the service to the standard which they themselves laid down, even with new units the public will not have to pay increased fares, as I foresee it, within another two years at the most in addition to the public subsidy which we now have. There is going to be an increase in bus fares in addition to the public subsidy because there is bound to be an increase in transport cost at least three times as much as the concessionaires originally asked for. That is the position in a nutshell. The Government knows that too and that is why the Minister is so ambiguous about the future position of public transport. That is why he refused to commit himself one way or the other because this is a deuce of a mess in which we have found ourselves. We are placed in the deuce of a mess by the Government from which they cannot extricate themselves; and now one of the most inexperienced and irresponsible members of the Government is calling upon the Opposition to tell them how to extricate themselves! That is what the hon. junior member for St. Joseph wants. He wants us to tell him what to do.

It seems to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Hon. Minister is singing the well-known song "Just One more Chance". Running through his entire speech, his theme song is "Just this one more chance". And even the hon. junior member for St. Joseph is also coming out in his speech with this song. They say that they have not ordered any more buses but they are asking for this one more chance. When we lose another \$2 million, I do not know what they would do. They went and bought buses at a price which they were not worth. I am told that we have 32 comparatively new buses in the Transport Board yard lying down idle. Those 32 buses were bought with funds from the Treasury. The hard earned taxpayers' money

bought them under the Government's administration and, as I am told, those buses want major repairs now.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member said that 32 Mercedes Benz want major repairs and are lying idle now. How can that be so when we only ordered twenty?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Well then, it means all twenty are lying down. I said that I had not seen them; therefore, I did not know how many they were. I said 32 purposely so that if I were wrong, the Hon. Minister could have denied the statement.

What I want to hear the Hon. Minister say now is whether the twenty they have ordered are working or are lying down in the yard. I say so because if you ordered twenty and all twenty are lying down, the least I would say is that the Minister should pay for them because they ordered them. Every single one of them was ordered during their regime.

4.55 p.m.

I, myself, would serve the commitment tomorrow morning against them for not paying for the buses. They have the experience of previous buses being run in this country and so far as my memory serves me, I have never seen "Mercedes Benz" buses on the road before; but these transport experts in the Cabinet say that these buses were ordered by divine guidance; they flooded the island with them and when two of them are on the street the whole traffic is at a stand still. They never had any right there and apart from their absolute unsuitability, the buses are lying in the yard of the Transport Board, not being of any use at all. All that is three or four years ago. If we are going to give the Government a blank cheque to order more units for which, in another three years we will have to extend the Transport Board's yard for them to remain idle in, that would be a very serious state of affairs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Ghana has ordered a large supply of "Leylands" within the last week or so and the Leyland Company has arranged to have mechanics from Ghana to go to England to be trained in the maintenance and operation of the Leyland units. And if we are going to order 27, or rather if they have ordered 27 of these buses - the hon. member's denials cut no ice with me, I prefer to believe the British Government than to believe him; but if we have ordered these buses, then the Leyland people should be asked to have their experts to give us, free of charge, training in keeping these buses on the road. Ghana displays much more commonsense than we do in this matter and gives orders for the "Leylands" on the condition that the Leyland Company erect an assembly plant in Ghana in addition to training people up there for assembling the buses so as to provide work for Ghana employees. And not only that; with the assembly on the spot of these units, it means that your Leyland mechanics will have the opportunity of seeing these units from the ground up. They will be able to see every part of these units being assembled so that when the units are finished the local mechanics will know all about the maintenance of these buses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that will appeal to you more than it will appeal to any other member of this Chamber because Sir, from your experience you know how not to give untrained men expensive machines to handle. The Leyland Company has supplied units to Trinidad and to Jamaica; and if they want this West Indian trade, let them erect an assembly plant in Barbados to service the area; but by all means they should pay the cost of training some of the mechanics employed by the Transport Board so that by the time these units arrive we will have men in the island able to take care of them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is one further point I should like to make and it is this; reference to the debates will show that on a previous occasion when we ordered buses from Leyland, we were told how important it was to give the Leyland Company the maximum period of time to get these buses ready and what not, because they were very much in demand, and unless the Company had the

appropriate time they could not supply our demands. In this case, although we have not ordered them, let us just watch and see how quickly we will have the entire fleet of twenty-odd buses after this Bill has been passed and the Board is empowered to borrow money. The Board will either snatch the buses from the sky or somewhere else, but they will be there and they will be landing on the docks in Bridgetown. I must congratulate the Minister and the Transport Board in performing this amazing feat of getting twenty odd buses almost in the twinkling of an eye transported to Bridgetown when these things are in such short supply and in demand all over the world. I am assured in my conviction that the importance of this country is second to none; there is no other country in the world which could have done that and might I add, there is no other Government or any other Minister in the world who could have accomplished such a feat.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I might just reply to some points which have been raised by the Opposition. This debate has gone on at great length and certain phases of it were not surprising to me. I was not surprised to see the attitude of the members on the other side of the House like the hon. junior member for Christ Church and the hon. senior member for St. George. Of course, I will not concentrate too much on the hon. senior member for St. George, because he talked a lot of obeh and it seems to me that he is well qualified as an expert in that. You cannot deal with these problems like an obeh expert. Anyhow, the hon. member is not now in his seat and I do not know he is also an expert in the disappearing trick; but I will leave him to his own designs. I will start off with the hon. junior member for Christ Church and with certain statements which he made at the beginning of his speech in which he said that this Transport Board was a great burden to the taxpayers and the House was assured that, with the importation of this Managing Director, the losses would be done away with; that at the time when the Government took over from private enterprise, it was done for political reasons and we could only see public enterprise prospering and we revised or increased the fares, and so on. 5.05 p.m.

The hon. member said that we could only see public ownership prosper and we refused to give the increase in fares and so on.

Now, Sir, that is going to challenge him to go back a little into history. I know that the hon. senior member for St. Peter himself was forced to remind this House of a little history, because people in Barbados at times shy away from history. They do not seem to be able to face facts, and as the hon. member has said, at the time this Bill was passed in this House, not one member voted against it. Here we have the hon. senior member for St. Lucy saying that they did not give in to nationalising and operating the transport system of Barbados for political reasons; he should know because he joined in it and if he felt it should not be done, it is because he did not have the courage of his convictions to say so. Not one single member in this House stood up and said that Government should not have taken over transport, but having taken it over they refuse to face facts. What are the facts? We had to start on a new basis; we capitalised to a greater extent than we could, because we had to pay out more money than any private enterprise would have paid for those buses, \$400,000, when the expert told the Court that they were not worth even half that - \$150,000; but because it was Government, we were forced to pay \$400,000 for them. It was not an act of nationalisation, but an act of being forced by private enterprise, at a time when we were faced with chaos, to take over these concessions because they refused to run the buses. It was not a deliberate act of nationalisation; it was a case of keeping transport going because we refused to have a gun pointed at our heads by private concessionaires. That is a fact; it is no dream of mine.

As the hon. member had to remind the House, obviously starting off as we did in the raw with inexperienced people - experienced people would not come over with

us - we had unfortunately to choose a Board. It was difficult to get any one to come into the concern and be Chairman. All these difficulties faced us and simply because things had gone on and had reached a point where, as I said, there was this creeping paralysis, when we brought the Managing Director down here, you heard all this talk that Government should not run anything, and so long as it was Government it would never pay. As soon as this Board ran into difficulty - and with its history I do not see how it could do otherwise - you got sabotage here and there from various sources outside. The newspapers were against us telling a lot of stories about the Board and undermining the confidence of the public and the employees of the Board. Do you expect a Board to run efficiently when that kind of atmosphere is around it? The very people who had joined with us in saying we should nationalise this concern are the people who are trying to sabotage our efforts.

I told the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Managing Director, I am sure, would transform things, but what happened? Apparently it was more than a creeping paralysis; the creeping stage had been going on faster than I thought. He is a man who does not talk much but he told me that there are a lot of bad habits that need rectifying. This is a man that came from a concern running 400 buses; he was at the top and with each department running itself. Here you have a concern where you have to go in and teach every department. When these are not accepted from the first, what do you expect? Any entrepreneur who comes here for the first time and sets up a business will tell you that if you start off with a low standard, God help you, because it takes a tremendous effort to bring it up.

Let us look at the figures to show what we are faced with, and that by bringing him here and trying to drag up these standards and rationalise them where we can rationalise, something is being achieved. Look at the Profit and Loss Account, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the first quarter after he arrived there was an operative loss of \$48,095.21; in the second quarter to 31st March, 1959, it was \$42,583. 26; in the third quarter it was \$54,170.81; the rut was still in and not eradicated. In the last quarter of the year it was \$28,254.99, the lowest it has been since the Board took over. Obviously that is the result of some kind of efficiency in the Department. I am told that the following quarter to the end of December it is even less than that. I am bound to say these things. As I started out by saying, I did not intend to speak on policy; but I knew the Opposition would bring it up, and I had to put the facts before the public.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not saying that things are a hundred percent and that they cannot be vastly improved. I would not even say that you can ever get the Transport Board as perfect as Mr. A or B in private enterprise, because I know it is a long grind. We have to get public confidence and the confidence of the workers and their cooperation. Now that the workers are organised and with a responsible Union - I feel sure that if we get their cooperation things would be vastly improved so far as the attitude of the workers are concerned. We are not arguing that you are going to get 100% efficiency. Even up to two years ago in the House of Commons, a motion was passed that there should be an enquiry into the working of the London Transport system which has been a nationalised concern for at least half a century. 5.15 p.m.

That enquiry was held and when the Report was made it was revealed that things were not half as bad as was thought. But does that mean that tomorrow the Britishers would say: "Scuttle this nationalised system?" Does it mean that in San Juan, Puerto Rico where transport was once in the hands of private enterprise, as bad or as good as it may be now, the people would say: "Turn it back over to private enterprise?" Do you think they will say so in Bermuda or Ghana? Here you get the Conservatives telling you so. That is where you get a lack of public confidence. The people who ought to know better are saying: "Why don't you turn it back in?"

I am not going to be side-tracked. Hon. members have asked, "Why have you not come down with a policy? The Managing Director put up recommendations and why have you not taken decisions on them?" Obviously, with the history of the Transport Board before us, we have got to go very carefully into all these matters. We have to be convinced that the Board has the opportunity of gaining a greater degree of efficiency and a greater degree of co-operation first. (A VOICE: You had the opportunity of seeing that before.) It is only now beginning to show that these things are going to happen. I cannot say "Since they have given us recommendations, oh yes, we are going to act on them." Give us the opportunity to see that the Board is working all right, the machines and all the units moving in harmony, well oiled and running smoothly and then we can act on recommendations. What kind of Government would we be that we say as soon as recommendations are given us: "all right, we will act on them", before giving the Managing Director who submitted the recommendations the chance to see if the thing would work? The Report says that recommendations have been made for reorganising the entire service, that they have been approved by the Board and if they are implemented it should be possible to transform the service into a self-supporting unit. We have to be given a chance to see that the Transport Board can stand on its own feet and show that it can have the co-operation of the public and of the people concerned with it.

The figures contained in this Report are very heartening because it seems as if losses are being cut - and cut tremendously - and that there is more discipline up there. In some cases, they were many clerks; but, obviously, you do not lay off trained people when you do not know whether you will want them tomorrow. Obviously, we had to see what the future was before streamlining the Board. We cannot just act willy-nilly and in a hurry.

There are a lot more things said in this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by hon. members: but I noticed that the same two hon. members of the Conservative Opposition who talked a lot as regards private transport making money at the same rates are not in their places now. But while they talked about that, they did not say anything about the wages and hours of work of the employees in those concerns. I wondered why it is that private enterprise was making all these profits. As far as I am made to understand, these returns are not forthcoming. That is what I am told; therefore, when we hear that these vast profits are made by private enterprise in this line I believe that some of them may be very low indeed. When you hear these fallacies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you have certain facts before you, you must correct them.

Sir, we operate on certain routes and the average cost is 43.5 cents per mile. In the last quarter, on the route from Bridgetown to Speightstown we were able to make it pay; but when it came to extension of that route to Boscobelle and Pie Corner, we lost heavily. The people only used to pay 18 cents to Speightstown in the old days, now it is a penny more; but that is not enough to balance out the expenses on that route. What are you going to do? Should we ask the man who has a short route to go down there and take that route over and expect that he would agree to that? Hon. members on the other side say: "Look at Birch and look at this person; they are making money." That is stupidity. You have to view transport generally. As I have said, we lose heavily on the route from Bridgetown to Connell Town. We lose on the route from Bridgetown to Bayfield but not so heavily. I said that the average cost was 43.5 cents per mile. The Managing Director was able to change up the route from Bridgetown to Silver Sands and since he has done that he has made that to pay. The route from Bridgetown to Bush Hall was always a paying route because it is a good route. If you chop up the Transport Board and give that route to somebody it will bound to pay.

I say again, are you going to ask anyone to take over these routes, like those all down St. Lucy, because that person is making a profit on a good route and expect that he would take it over? Oh no; he will not do that. It

seems to me that as soon as you get into trouble, you say, "Unload it on somebody else." That is a policy of pessimism. I can never agree to that policy. If you know you have inefficiency in certain departments, try and break it up. In the last quarter of the Board's financial year, it has shown a state of efficiency can be reached. I do not know why some members of the Opposition think that I have all this power. A member of the Opposition said that members of the Government are divided on this matter and the Minister in charge is the only one who is standing in the way of the buses being returned to the former concessionaires. We take collective responsibility. None of us has our way but every measure which comes down here comes down here with the approval of everyone of us.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr.

SPEAKER took the Chair.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to clear up two points before I sit down. I saw a headline in the newspaper which stated that we wanted an auditor. As I have already explained, we felt that we should have a section in the Act so that any auditor appointed by the Board must have the approval of the Governor-in-Executive Committee. As it is at present, they can have an auditor without referring the matter to us, but no Statutory Body should be able to do that.

5.25 p.m.

No other Statutory Body similar to this one can do that and we feel that the position should be changed. It is not that we have lost confidence in the auditors or that we should do away with them or anything of the sort. I think that I should correct that statement.

Another thing is that there was a charge made against the Board by the hon. senior member for St. Lucy as to money made on outings being lost and gone astray and so on. He said so many things in his speech which could only have arisen from his imagination or from some strange quirk of mentality, that I do not want to reply to everything he said. I saw a charge made in the newspaper with which I believe the hon. member was associated and I have investigated it and this is the procedure which we have:-

"On a request for Charter an Application Form "A" is supplied to the applicant. This Form is filled out and returned.

"All applicants should pay for the required buses before the day of the Excursion or Charter. Twenty (21) days before the day of Charter a circular "B" is sent to the applicant.

"If our requirements are satisfied, a release for the buses - Form "C" - is issued to the Superintendent of the Operations Department who will make the necessary application to the Department of Highways and Transport. Form "D". On the morning of the Charter a numbered Way bill is given to the conductor of each bus. This is shown to the Gateman whose duty it is to check the Parochial Number, time and destination of each unit that leaves the Transport Board Yard and records the same.

"The conductor of each bus is required to hand his Way bill to the Operation Department. These Way Bills are then forwarded to the Internal Audit Department where they are checked against amounts paid. It is the duty of a Senior Clerk to visit the various sites of these excursions and see that buses are there and well taken care of."

That system suggests that fraud will have little chance of success. These allegations are those which you will get in these irresponsible newspapers which have little regard for the truth. When you get all these stories and whispers and when people say that there is no smoke without fire, the obvious intention is to undermine public confidence in the Transport Board. You cannot work any public utility unless you have confidence in the Board. When you have these saboteurs who say that you should hand back over the buses, what else can you expect?

Mr. TUDOR: On a point of order. When the hon. member refers to these saboteurs, to whom is he referring?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will have to find that out.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: I mean the people who get along with these newspapers and try to work in an irresponsible manner. If that cap fits some people, then they can draw the string. These insinuations are made about members of the Government in order to foul their character. That, Mr. Speaker, is what I am referring to. How are you going to gain public confidence in that way? You are bound to have suspicion, inertia and lack of confidence. I will not say anything more than that because the opportunity will come again and I will have to repeat a lot of these things. I thought that I would say these things because they are necessary to be said on occasions of this sort.

The question that this Bill be now read a second 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, Mr. SEARLES and Mr. STRAUGHN.....7.

Noes: Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. TUDOR, and Mr. BRANCKER.....3

On the motion of Hon. R. G. MAPP, seconded by Hon. D. D. GARNER, being put and agreed to, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair, and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. BRYAN being in the Chair.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

Clause 3 was called.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: I beg to move, Mr. Chairman, that Clause 3 stand part of the Bill.

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

Mr. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, this Clause is the most important part of this Bill. This is the Clause which empowers the Board from time to time with the approval of the Governor-in-Executive Committee, to borrow by way of loan, overdraft or otherwise, such sums as the Board may require for meeting their obligations or discharging their functions. Of course, all hon. members of this House with the exception of the Minister, understand how serious this matter is this afternoon. The Minister, somehow or other, has not explained to us whether, in view of the fact that he is now seeking permission for the Board to discharge its obligations, and in view of the fact that a part of the obligations of the Transport Board is to the Executive Committee of this island, the Board will in future be borrowing money from somewhere else to repay what has been advanced by the Executive Committee. Here is the confusion; the Governor-in-Executive Committee has to approve, or rather, to guarantee loans obtained by the Transport Board, but we all know that the biggest creditor of the Transport Board is the Governor-in-Executive Committee. 5.35 p.m.

Are we to understand, then, Mr. Chairman, that you are asking the Governor-in-Executive Committee to guarantee loans made by the Transport Board to meet obligations, the largest obligation being its obligation to the Governor-in-Executive Committee? What sort of nonsense is this? That is why we contest this Bill through lack of policy. It is unfair and dishonourable on the part of Government to want support on a matter like this when they do not clearly indicate, especially in the way in which the Clause is worded, what exactly the Government will be asked to underwrite. As a matter of fact I go further; this money which the Board will borrow according to this Clause we are now discussing is to enable the Board to meet its obligations. The Minister tells us that the Board cannot meet its obligations, not because it is inefficiently run, not because there is something wrong with it, but because according to him people who are not members

of it and who have nothing to do with it are sabotaging it, because allegedly their own newspaper writes for them. In other words, the blame is not put where it is, on the lack of administration or on the lack of a financial policy, and that lack of financial policy is clearly seen in the terms of this Clause; and instead of coming out in the open and admitting the inability of Government to discharge its obligations to the people of this island, they are now saddling them with more obligations under this Clause to underwrite the Transport Board and to guarantee its borrowing money to meet its obligations, when the person or persons guaranteeing the obligations are the biggest creditors of the Board.

If the Transport Board, even under this Bill, went to Barclays Bank tomorrow and said they wanted some money, the officials of the bank would be bound to ask first of all how much they wanted. If the Board's affairs are being honestly conducted, the Board must disclose to the Bank that it wants money first of all to pay the Governor-in-Executive Committee, because it must disclose its liabilities and its largest liability is what it owes the Government of Barbados. If, Mr. Chairman, that is not so, this House has been terribly misled in the past and what we thought was an advance to the Board was in fact a raid upon the Public Treasury for political purposes. Either the Board admits that its chief creditor is the Government of Barbados or it does not; if it admits that its chief creditor is the Government of Barbados, then any money it borrows from whatever source must be to repay the Government of Barbados. If that is so, Mr. Chairman, a would-be-lender would be bound to ask "When we lend you money to discharge your obligations the greatest of which is your duty to Government, what will you have to run your concern with?" The Board would be bound to say one or two things; either "We feel that after we have reimbursed the Executive Committee we can get along from there," or "we feel that in addition to repaying the Government of Barbados we want money to carry on the service."

If it does the latter, it is complicating itself further because it would be borrowing money without having any assets to show, and it will have no assets to show because to this day and in this debate at the eleventh hour the Minister cannot give this House the assurance that the Transport Board has any assets of its own. (Hon. R. G. MAPP: Read the Report.) Do not say; read the Report; say when you handed over anything to the Transport Board; just tell the public that—when, upon what terms and under what conditions—and give the House the assurance that any reputable financial institution in this island will advance money to the Transport Board as at present constituted. If that were so, you would not need to be asking for legislative sanction to underwrite and guarantee loans raised by the Board, and I warn Government that in this very Clause as it is worded they are opening themselves up to more serious trouble, trouble the extent of which the Minister has not yet foreseen. The obligations of the Board include obligations to the Governor-in-Executive Committee, because the Governor-in-Executive Committee is the largest creditor of the Board. How can the largest creditor in these circumstances guarantee the Board? That is what we have been asked, and do you expect with this state of affairs any reputable Bank or financial institution to advance loans on these terms?

I am certain that shortly from now the Government is going to have to come back to the House with amending or amplifying legislation to make good and make clear exactly what is not made good or made clear here.

Before I sit down, Mr. Chairman, I must, all in connection with this, take up the Minister on something which he said which not only reflects on him personally but reflects more so on the Board for which he is responsible. He said that one of the reasons why the Board is losing money is through lack of confidence, suspicion and sabotage. He started to answer a point I made by saying I had made a charge with respect to chartered services. He said he did not know or he could not say what the facts were, but that he was certain they were products of my imagination, and he read out what he called the new Rules drawn up by the Perman-

ent Secretary for the guidance of the Board in the matter of excursions and so on.

I am now asking him, Mr. Chairman, through you whether it was not reported to him by the Manager that a member of his staff at the Board responsible for chartered services could not account for the funds accruing from at least two excursions and possibly three, whether the Manager did not recommend to him the dismissal of that person, whether instead of that person being dismissed he was not allowed to go on leave to Trinidad or on holiday until the thing blew over, and whether when he came back an arrangement was not made with the employee in charge to repay the money which was missing out of his salary monthly. When the Minister can answer those questions, I am prepared to withdraw everything I have said. In any case, Mr. Chairman, anybody who even from listening to the accounts.....

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, could the hon. member put those questions down on paper and let me get an investigation conducted and give him the answers?

Mr. TUDOR: It is amazing really- the subterfuges that that Minister adopts when he wants to get out of a difficult situation.
5.45 p.m.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: What subterfuge is there in my telling him that I am having an investigation? Let the hon. member take off his shades and see who is guilty of subterfuge. I am asking the hon. member to withdraw that word.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am speaking to the hon. senior member for St. Lucy. The Minister has asked that those questions be put in writing so that he would be able to have a thorough investigation into the charges being made. It is dealing with the loss by the Transport Board and I do not see the subterfuge in that which the Hon. Minister is asking. I think it would be the proper way in going about the matter because it is a serious charge. Incidents of that nature would put the Board in the position where it would be unable to borrow money which it wants; therefore, I do not think it is an unreasonable request made of you. The Minister has objected to the word "subterfuge" and I ask you to withdraw the word.

Mr. TUDOR: I will not quibble on that point. If he objects to the use of the word "subterfuge", I withdraw it willingly but he cannot stop me from meaning it.

Hon. R. G. MAPP: Mr. Chairman, I have asked that the word be withdrawn and I want an unqualified withdrawal of the word "subterfuge".

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I understand the hon. senior member for St. Lucy to say that he withdrew the word "subterfuge".

Mr. TUDOR: Yes, Your Honour, but you cannot stop me from meaning it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I take it that you cannot stop him from meaning it, although he has withdrawn it.

Mr. TUDOR: I will say, Mr. Chairman, if it is not subterfuge, it is parliamentary manoeuvre. I take it that there is no objection to that word. I say so because to ask me to put charges in writing which I have said and made on the floor of the House in the presence of the Minister is asking a bit too much. He will get them in writing when he sees them in the debate. He may answer them then if he so wishes, but it is parliamentary manoeuvre in requesting me to put them down in writing because I believe that he has some knowledge about the matters of which I spoke. Of course, I do not blame him for not committing himself to the giving of an answer, but I do know that if he had one suspicion that I was not on sure ground, he would not wait for me to finish asking the question; he would jump up and prove me a liar immediately. But he has some sneaking suspicion that I may, after all, be right and that is why he

wants time to consider the answers. Sir, how many times in here hon. members have made charges concerning which Ministers have not waited for the grass to grow under their feet before denying them? Sometimes, that Hon. Minister denies a wrong accusation and gets off. No denial has come as yet and in instances as the one I have quoted which has sabotaged the Transport Board, they happen because the people guilty are either very good friends of members of the Government or because they are highly established or feel that they themselves cannot be disciplined and therefore, they are allowed to get away with it. The Hon. Minister knows that is true. I say that because this Committee is asked to guarantee a very important thing when we are asked to guarantee that Board to borrow money. It is not sabotage; it is not suspicion; it is not lack of confidence which has put the Transport Board in the position it is in. If it is not that, then it is not having a proper financial policy and your trying to be a penny wise and a pound foolish.

Any efforts of saving money by this Board would be welcome by this House; certainly, they would be welcome by this Government. But you do not go after the big savings; you go after the little things that really create a hardship on people whom the Board employs. Mr. Chairman, can you imagine that this island recently had the pleasure during the cricket season of seeing the Barbados team defeat the M.C.C. and in that team was a young player who comes from my constituency, a man called Charles Griffith and a man who acquitted himself with distinction. That young man is employed by the Transport Board. Do you know, Mr. Chairman, that that Board refused to pay that young man his salary for the few days he was representing Barbados in the Colony match? I do not believe, Mr. Chairman, that what they saved by not paying this man his full salary was as much as \$20; but here it is; you throw money down the drain in all kinds of ways, but apply all regulations so as to deprive a man, who brought distinction in sport, of a few miserly cents because he is a poor man. Can you justify that by saying that you save money? Is that how you save money? Who is sabotaging whom? Do you mean that something done in the honour of cricket in this island would have caused the Board to lose money? I wish to say that I drew it to the Minister's attention and he said that he did not know of it but that he would look into it and see what could be done. Up to my knowledge, this young man has not yet received that amount he lost by attending cricket. He was in the employ of the Board at the time he was representing the island and they would not pay him the money for the few days he was at Kensington. Everybody knew where he was. We do not save money that way.

Sir, you have to try to save money for the Board in other ways, in much more important ways. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we advise them even at this late hour to state their policy. Do not let the Governor-in-Executive Committee recommend loans which the Board may borrow, because the Governor-in-Executive Committee is the Board's biggest creditor and bankers or lenders may well ask, "How can the Board have its loans guaranteed by an institution which itself is a creditor of the Board?" If winding up does come and the Board's affairs were being liquidated, the Governor-in-Executive Committee will have to stand on the side of the Board's creditors; and whatever assets the Board has then would have to be shared out equally or in proportion. You cannot have the situation where the Governor-in-Executive Committee should be in the position of being the guarantor and the creditor at the same time.
5.55 p.m.

There is confusion here, and I am certain, Mr. Chairman, that whoever is asked to lend the Board money, will query that matter, and will want to know about the dual position where the Governor-in-Executive Committee can be both creditor to the Board and guarantor of its financial activities. When this question is posed to the Government, as I am sure it will be, the Government will have one of two choices; they will either have to say that sums advanced by the Treasury were given as outright gifts or as loans. If the sums were advanced as gifts, they were not asked for as gifts; and if they were not given as gifts, then the Government is creditor just as any other lender

would be, and the creditor's interest would have to be safeguarded. If the Minister had only stated the Government's policy, we should all know where we are. No policy has been stated and it is the lack of policy among other things, which is responsible for what we are now faced with, rather than the alleged suspicion or lack of public confidence which the Minister is prepared to see exercised on the part of the critics of the Board.

Mr. WALCOTT: Mr. Chairman, I do not know what the position is with the Government in this matter, because I have been hearing that the Government seems not to be in favour of it. What has surprised me in this debate is to hear the remarks of the hon. senior member for St. Lucy. I have always thought that the hon. member was an avowed Socialist; we can look forward to a situation in Britain tonight in that the Railway Union has given notice that there will be a strike on the 15th of this month. A former boss of the hon. junior member for St. John in the Air Force is the Chairman of the British Transport Commission, but no member of the Labour Party or the Socialists in England would seriously get up in Parliament and say that there are difficulties in the transport and in the railways. The railways in England have not been making any money, but no member of the Socialists in Parliament would suggest that you should denationalise the railways and give them back to private people, because you might have members on the Board who are not making any money. If there are members of the Government who belong to that school of thought, then they should resign their positions. A part of the Labour Party's philosophy in this island is nationalisation; you take over something that you say you do not believe in. You do believe in public ownership, and have you abandoned that idea because the people are not running it as you would like them to run it? I agree with this amendment for many reasons. If the Government is really serious about these things, then let them get down to business. The Government has the responsibility and I would say quite boldly that the Government was dominated by thinking that if they had a Board like the Transport Board or some of these other Boards they would look around for some of the most incompetent people, what are known as "yard fowls" to use a common colloquialism, and put them there. The thing to which hon. members are objecting is that they do not have any confidence in the Board. My problem about it is that the Government should have avoided putting on the Board some people because they are supposed to be supporters of the Party. Lord Citrine is Chairman of the Government Electricity Board; he was put there by the Labour Party but the Conservatives did not say that he should not have been there. Lord Citrine is Chairman of the Electricity Board - not as a "yard fowl" - and he is working in the public interest, in the interest of the British public. The position is that you are Chairman of this Board and you are working in the interest of the public. You should find proper people and put them on the Board, not incompetent people. Mr. Chairman, I am not making any reference to the present members of the Board because it would be impolite to do so. You want a little more exercise, a little more breadth so that you can choose what you need.

I agree with the hon. junior member for St. Joseph, that there are aspects of your administration, not among the Civil Service but in your general administration, which need examination. By that, I mean this; there are competent men in the hierarchy of the Civil Service, men whom you can second to a specific task in the Transport Board, and not take a lot of people who are incompetent to put them to do this job. Just as you have taken Captain Tomlin and seconded him to other duties, you can second men from the Civil Service to undertake duties at the Transport Board. You have taken away the majority of the work from under contract and put it in the hands of competent people, and I do not believe that anybody could tell you that the regime of Captain Tomlin is not superior to anything that the contractors have done in the past. You take the Government in executing Public Works today as against Public Works in the past. Combermere School has fallen down.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should not expand that too much.

Mr. WALCOTT: This is just an analogy to show that the Government should not do these things. In this debate mention was made about administration and it only shows what kind of administration is available to you. I have said in this House on more than one occasion that transport should be organised in Barbados as a public corporation. Moreover, I say, now that another situation has arisen, that the Government has at its disposal enough senior Civil Servants who can be seconded to the Transport Board; and if you are going to give large sums of money to people, who have been accustomed to administering large sums of money, you will have discipline all the way down, because at the top you have men who can grapple with the job.
6.05 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I believe in a man who has a job to do, taking off his jacket and buckling down in it. What has happened with this Board? To be quite frank, it is not a question that the Government did not have much of a policy because the Government could not have a policy on Transport as they took it over before they initiated a policy. The only policy Government had was to put all their supporters on this Board. Members of the Opposition today feel that it is not so much a matter of public ownership. I did not agree with the hon. senior member for St. Lucy, but I more agreed with his colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, who has always been a supporter of public ownership, and in the early days of transport he was a member of the Board; so he knows some of the problems that existed in this island before.

I am not against the Board getting money, because to those members who were not aware of the situation in this island I would say that Mr. Arthur Jordan, Mr. Reid, Mr. Fergusson and Mr. Massiah had buses; all the little men who had buses found in process of time that they had to give the buses to these big people. One morning there was a famous thing in Probyn Street with the Lone Star buses, and it was almost a riot. These buses were painted white. I did not know how you impounded a bus, but the bailiff went to impound a bus and the driver was trying to get the bus up to Christ Church to the garage while the bailiff was trying to get into the bus. Eventually you found that General Omnibus Co. became the big owners. I do not subscribe to the idea that small people can buy buses because they cannot make the kind of investments. If you hand these over to big investors, they are going to borrow the money and, as the hon. junior member for Christ Church said, pay a higher rate of interest, and all that is going to mean that they are going to tell the Government they want gasoline tax, road tax, trade tax and every kind of tax because Government said it could not make money. Government would have to give these things to them. If you lend the Board the money or guarantee it, Government should be able to keep a watchful eye and see that the rates of interest are not too high. If the Government policy is that public transport is something the public should own and control, and if the public owning and controlling it means it is owning it through the representatives which the people elected, it means you have a responsibility to all. Now as shareholders you should see that you put the best Directors to control our business and not the worst you can find. My idea of the Transport Board with that amount of money - although it is a lot of money, it is not so much money for a person who really knows his business to administer. One man maybe in a Department in England administers as much as the Transport Board. When you put a man in a depot in some part of England, he administers as much as that; but when you are appointing a Chairman, I do not believe in putting a man who is afraid of himself and afraid to control men. You cannot have a Plant Superintendent or a man in charge of 300 men who does not know how to speak to men. They are in the Union and it is not a question that I cannot go and tell them they cannot do so and so, because if they do something contrary they must be dismissed for so doing. What kind of representative would I be to make a man believe that he can do what he pleases and let the employer say "O.K. those are only little idiosyncrasies"? I must tell a man that if he wants to do a job he has to work properly.

I know how the hon. senior member for St. Lucy feels when he speaks about these accounts, but I would warn him that we are living in a small society in which the capitalists want the capitalist economic system not to be touched, and they would jump at the slightest mistake that is made with that type of philosophy or system. The hon. junior member for Christ Church made a most impassioned speech because it was a speech to buttress the capitalist economic system. He does not want the buses taken away in the same way the hon. senior member for St. Lucy does, but they would be singing the same tune in changing something at another stage if the hon. member was in Government. I cannot take the place of members over there because one man cannot run a Government. You will realise, Mr. Chairman, that there is no Government for me to run; the only Government I can run is my little Government at home, and I have to work to run that. I have to carry in money to run it; and if I do not, the Government will collapse.

What I feel in this matter is that you cannot support the idea of taking over something today and if it does not run well, give it back over. If you are going to accept that dictum, you would give back the Public Works to private contractors wherever you hear that a mistake was made in the Department.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is going a little too wide out of this Clause. I admit that you have made analogies previously, but now you are going to Public Works which is outside the ambit of this Bill. Analogies are all right, but you should not develop them too much. Please deal with the Clause dealing with the borrowing of money.

Mr. WALCOTT: The borrowing of money means the retention of the system of public ownership as against private ownership, and what I am pointing out is that the hon. member spoke of not having it this way as well as those who spoke after; so I am making the point that if you get inroads into this idea because the Government is to guarantee the money, then a similar situation might take place in the Public Works Department. So I am saying that because something goes wrong in one of your Departments, it does not mean that you must give it back to private ownership. That is a point you have to make with any Department which uses as much money as this Board and makes a loss. The Housing Authority loses money too; \$3 million have not been repaid and you do not know if you will ever get it back. Are you suggesting that because \$3 million have not been repaid, you should therefore scrap housing, form a building society of private people and turn the money over to them?

I acknowledge, Mr. Chairman, that the transport system was taken over at a time when the Government was not prepared for it, and I was one of those who said you were not prepared for it, but by all means you had to take it over. I said then that as soon as you take over something, you must be prepared to get the right people to run it.
6.15 p.m.

The hon. member made a further statement that you should not put the Government in a position where it could be a guarantor of the Board. I say that if that was not in, no bank or lender would loan the Board money. The lawyers around this table would tell you that too. It is just like any other Government. The Barbados Government gets loans, not because the Barbados Government is the Barbados Government, but because it is one of the United Kingdom's dependencies. Jamaica wanted to get a loan from the United States of America but they could not get it unless the United Kingdom Government could tell the U.S.A. what they could do about the matter. A Board like the Transport Board must have Government's backing in order to get a bank to lend them money. Of course, a bank is not bound to have the Government's backing if the bank knows that you have so much money and, therefore, you would not require Government's backing. But if a bank knows that a Board is poor and cannot finance its way, it is not going to lend that Board money; therefore, the Government must step in. A

Government cannot set up a new Board and give that Board power to borrow money unless the Government is going to guarantee the Board; therefore, the Government is bound to guarantee the Transport Board. We all knew that then; but in the anxiety of those of us who were here then, nobody listened then when it was pointed out that certain things should take place.

Sir, I am satisfied that there is scope for the Government to run a Transport system provided you rid yourself of all the encumbrances which you have there, whatever they are. You must rid yourself of the nuisances which tend to stultify you. What was wrong with the Transport Board was that there were too many "yard fowls" on it. It was saddled with too many incompetent people. A bus is like a ship. A bus loses money when it is down and a ship loses money when it is not turning around. I am not a very inquisitive person; therefore, I do not know how many buses are lying idle for want of repair. I do hope that the Government would say to the people of the Transport Board; "Let us put this thing on a good footing" and see to it that they do so.

I would just say this, that with a place like the Transport Board which is offering employment to so many people there is a dangerous thing which is not realised by many people. The dangerous thing about this matter is that if these buses are turned over to private enterprise, not one of us in here would be able to keep a proper check on the wages and conditions of employment of the employees in the industry. A lot of us say "Let private enterprise run this and run that" as if private enterprise is so good. If private enterprise is so good, why is it that the lot of the average working men after they have been so long with private enterprise - it is still so hard with them in this year of grace? It should be much better than it is. Therefore, there is nothing in the private economic sector for anybody to shout about.

I am satisfied that in a system like public transport, the Government will have to step in. You have to step in, in such a way, that you can join with private enterprise and this is a system in which you are rendering the public a service. You therefore have to impress upon the directors of the Board that they are sharing in the dividends when they render the public a proper and efficient service. I am satisfied that if you get public-spirited men to be in charge of the operations of the public transport, it will be run with success. You should be able to tell people who are working there that if they are not willing to put in proper work, they must be willing to go home. No man who does not want to work should accept employment and any man who does not want to work and who is in employment should go home. There are enough beaches around here where a man who does not want to work can go and enjoy himself.

Sir, this is an aspect of public ownership. We have our defects in the operation of it. But what I think we should be asking the Government is to see to it that they make a good job of it. That is why I say that I agree with the Hon. Leader of the Opposition when he said that the Government should get down to it and clean up whatever mess there is to be cleaned up. I am doing my part with the drivers and the conductors and people like them, but I cannot deal with the supervisory staff there. Talk to those people. If you have a man at a certain point and the man cannot do the job, tell him so. Do not borrow this money and let incompetent people administer it. The Civil Service is a very good structure and there are enough senior members in it who could be seconded to the Transport Board. See to it that you get quality there; what I think you want there is quality at the top. If you do not have quality at the top and you are hoping that the people at the bottom will push up the people at the top, you are surely mistaken. You want people at the top who can sit down and plan something. Therefore, the Government should examine the situation there from the top to the bottom.

What I also think that you need is a widening of the membership of the Board. You cannot expect that four

members and a Chairman are enough to do the work of a Board. That number is not enough even if the members were four geniuses or four giants. I do know that the Labour Party does not have a lot of giants waiting around the corner from the point of view of having proper people to take over the working of this Board. We have a lot of people whom we can dress up; we have more of these than we want; but it is a fact that Barbados does not possess in reserve a lot of those people who can see after things. However, I am suggesting that you make the Transport Board a seven-man Board. I am not suggesting whom you should have on that Board, but let the Minister go through the matter very carefully. I want on that Board somebody who would inspire some confidence in the public. That is the man you want. You want someone who can impress you that he knows what he is doing. The Minister says that he wants the co-operation of the public. It needs the co-operation of the public and of the worker, and the best way to get co-operation is to get people on the Board with inspiration. You must have inspired leadership.

I support this Bill because I feel very grieved indeed to think that the first trial which you can say that a Government which represents the working class has had to run something which is not a nationalised service but a quasi-public service, the reflection is - and that reflection is obvious - therefore I need say nothing more.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Chairman, my purpose in speaking at this juncture of the debate on Clause 3, is simply to point out that on the 18th August, 1955, which is well over four years ago, when the same Clause 15 of the Transport Act which we are now amending was being discussed in this House, the pundits in the Government Party did not elect to listen to the advice which had been tendered by those of us on this side of the House.

6.25 p.m.
They were then led, like so many sheep, by the blackest sheep of them all, who was always in the habit of telling people that they read their law books and do not understand them, and he is yet to hear of any other person in the West Indies who has spent as long a time in trying to digest them. He is no longer here, Mr. Chairman, and I will not make any further reference to him; but on the 18th August, 1955, we, on this side suggested the very amendment which is now engaging the attention of the House, - I would go further and say the very amendment which is wasting the time of this House, because if the advice given on this side of the House had been taken, I respectfully suggest that there would not have been any need for this amending Bill today. There is not a single proposal which is set out in this Bill which was not pointed out as a defect in the Bill of 1955.

Mr. Chairman, I want to quote from the debates because I want to go on record again. I want to quote from page 1436 of the debates of 1955, in order to show you how the taxpayers' money is being wasted. On that page of that debate - I am not reflecting on the vote of the House, I am only quoting it to show that this proposal was made from this side of the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The proposal contained in the Section?

Mr. BARROW: It is exactly the same and they can see their typical lack of understanding when their Leader said that nobody could question the matter, and now we have the hyena-ish grins and laughter emanating from that side of the House. At 7.05 p.m. on the 18th August, 1955 - I hope that the Minister of Communications is taking a note of this for his editorial columns - I happened to be speaking on Clause 15 of the Bill which is the Clause which we are amending at this juncture at 6.15 p.m. on the 12th February, 1960. That is four and a half years ago, not yesterday, and after frittering away \$2 million of the taxpayers' money, they can now come around to see what the late hon. junior member for the City and I myself were saying on Clause 15 of this Bill. I am reported as saying this:-

"Every other Bill to set up a corporate body especially one which will indulge in trade, every statute that we have had, had made it clear where the funds of the Cor-

poration are to come from and what is to be done with the funds of the Corporation. Now as the hon. junior member for the City has pointed out, because we vote money to the Governor-in-Executive Committee, do not think that you can use Clause 15 or 16 to borrow money on loan or that you have authority from the Governor-in-Executive Committee to do so; do not think that at all. That power was not even in existence when that money \$30,000 was voted.."

Mr. Chairman, I say this parenthetically; this \$30,000 was in reference to a Resolution which was discussed at an earlier stage of running the buses for two weeks and I pointed out that at that rate they would be spending \$780,000 a year. Mr. Chairman, I go on to quote:-

"and that money was voted to the Governor-in-Executive Committee for two weeks' operation of the bus service." Mr. Chairman, if we omit a paragraph which is not germane to the issue, we go on:-

"We are passing a Bill now without giving the Board funds, but at the same time we are giving it power to sell all these buses on whatever terms they might feel like. That is to say, if you should start paying 15 years from now, this Board will have to bear all of that; but we cannot say how much money the taxpayers will be called upon to give to the Board and that is something which we should know."

Well, we know of one million dollars; that is what the lack of foresight, the lack of vision and the lack of understanding of the Labour Party is costing the people of this island. Mr. Chairman, I go on to quote:-

"We are now setting up a Transport Board and are not giving them a cent; but you have given them the power to bank and borrow money; and the amount of debt which they can incur seems to be based on the amount of revenue lying down in the Treasury from time to time. This is entirely unsatisfactory; and the unsatisfactory manner in which the issue has been handled by the Minister of Communications does not leave a good taste in the mouths of honest persons; for the simple reason that there are so many questionable things going on behind the scene that one could never feel that the affairs of the colony are in good hands"

I pause here to say that I merely want to repeat what I said before I reiterate and emphasise it. I go on to quote:-

"What I say is this; it should be made clear, as it has been done in the Natural Gas Corporation Act and other similar Acts, exactly where the funds are going to come from; whether they are going to be voted by the Legislature or whether this is going to be a profit-making concern or whether they will have to borrow money quite apart from the general provisions of Clauses 15 and 17 which state that they may borrow money; or whether there is going to be a temporary advance of \$1 million out of the Public Treasury which will have to be paid back by the Board."

Now, Sir, I quote that for the edification of members on the Other side, and for that of those members who are present there today but who did not take any part in the deliberations of this Chamber on the 18th August, 1955. The whole of my political career in Barbados seems to be spent now on telling the members of the Government Party: "I told you so." Everyday I have to say: "I have told you so" and I can cite chapter and verse, page and paragraph, for everything I have said on any major financial issue which has confronted the taxpayers of this island. I am not trying to blow my own trumpet, but I am asking the members of the Government again to realise that parliamentary democracy does not mean the imposition of incompetence upon the unwitting taxpayers of this island, whether it is in the form of the Chairman or members of a Statutory Board or tribunal, or members of the Government or those who use the Ministerial Bench. Parliamentary democracy means that one must sit down and think out the policy which is best and most salutary for

the people of this island as a whole. For political spite, when advice has come, no matter whether it comes from the backbenchers or the Opposition, all they have to say is; "We do not pay any attention to that", and all of that is costing the taxpayers money. Every time that a Bill has to be read three times, all of that is costing money to the taxpayers of this island. The late Mr. A. E. S. Lewis pointed out the deficiencies in Bills of this nature having to be printed and circulated and put in proper form and sent back down to this House. That is costing the taxpayers money.
6.35 p.m.

Now, Sir, the position today is that there is still a deficiency in the Bill. There is still a deficiency in this Clause, and if I as a banker - I am not saying I am a banker except when I am playing twenty-ones - were approached by any investor who wanted to purchase debentures or whatever issue was coming out from the Transport Board guaranteed by the Barbados Government Treasury, I would be forced to advise my clients not to lend them any money, because one would expect that a Board which derives its powers under statute would have all of its Acts clearly defined. There are no inferences in a statutory creation, and that is what we were trying to point out in 1955 when I mentioned during the course of the Resolution in the same month of August, 1955 for \$30,000 for two weeks which they wanted to borrow; and I will digress just to say that up to now nobody knows what is the position with the \$2 million which has been drained away by the Transport Board.

The Government has come from time to time with Resolutions for money to advance to them although there was no power under the Transport Board Act for them to accept advances from the Government; speaking under correction, that is my recollection of the 18 or 20 Clauses of the Act. They certainly had power for a Magistrate to fine anybody \$200 who committed a breach of any of the Regulations, but they certainly had no power stating that the Transport Board could draw money from the Treasury; so from 1955 until the present moment they have come and raided the Treasury of this island on behalf of the Transport Board without any sort of legal relationship existing between the advancing of these loans and depletion of the Treasury.

The position under Clause 15 is this: You have now done what we said you should have done a long time ago, but why I referred to the decision of a banker having to advise his clients is that it is elementary, Sir, - it is so elementary it may sound ridiculous - that if you borrow money, the people who lend you the money expect to be repaid. Now I will advertise this until they change it; I will go out in public, and I know that on previous occasions the Ministers have not been reluctant to suggest to the Commissioner of Police that members of the Opposition should be charged with creating a public mischief when we have told the people what their legal rights were. Therefore at the risk of being charged, if they are so ill-advised, with creating a public mischief every time they come out in public to give the Transport Board authority to call for subscriptions, debentures or raise loans, I will advise people not to lend them any money, because legally they are under no obligation to repay the money. That is the point I was trying to make. They have inserted in the Bill power to borrow money and no power to repay.

Now I wish the former member for St. Joseph, the Federal Prime Minister were here, because he would get up and say that the members on this side do not understand the Law books that they read, but I say this without any fear of contradiction: if you intend to borrow money, there must be a correlative duty to repay the money. When they have finished borrowing the money, if you leave Section 15 as it is, what is going to happen is that the Treasury will have to repay the money and the Transport Board will be under no obligation whatsoever because only the guarantor will have to repay the money. After we have spoken at length from 1955, I cannot consider that this was an oversight on the part of the person

who drafted this Bill; it must have been deliberately done, because they are amending the Bill along the lines we said it should be amended the first time it came before the House four and a half years ago, and it was at that time that we pointed out that you must have correlative power to repay money if you are going to borrow.

The Treasury of Barbados in truth and in fact is the guarantor of these borrowings - I cannot even say loans - because the debentures which they would raise do not have the attributes of a loan. Loans have a right to be repaid, but with this statutory body created by the Legislature they do not say to borrow and to repay on such terms as they think fit, so how on earth are they going to repay? They are not going to repay. It is perpetuating the same system of the Executive taking money out of the Treasury, advancing it to the Transport Board, and when it comes to the Transport Board it can owe Robert Thom \$49,000 for gasoline. I do not know if Robert Thom got the money for gasoline, but they have got a few more Vauxhall cars on the road. They probably owe more now.

After juggling around with the figures, I understand on fairly good authority that we did not get this audited statement before because it was sent back from the Ministry of Communications with directions that they could not bring these figures to the House, so "fix them up a little bit and let us give them back", and that is why we have to wait so long to get these accounts. The Accountant in the Transport Board was threatened with his job if he did not falsify these accounts. 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear'. We did not get this Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account in October because the losses were not acceptable by the Ministerial benches for presentation to the general public, and that is the way the affairs of this country are being run at the present moment. If they do not want to put in power on the part of the Transport Board to repay the money to the people from whom they have raised these debentures, and the terms on which they should repay the money, I can only come to the conclusion that they are trying to hoodwink the general public. They intend to continue the policy of taking money from time to time, probably by Ministerial statements, because that is an innovation which I do not think I can describe as new in Parliamentary procedure, where you can come and make a statement and spend money out of the Treasury in whatever way you like. We saw the experiment made by my colleague from St. John, the Minister of Education, only a few weeks ago. They will continue to take money out of the Treasury, and the Transport Board will never be legally responsible for paying back the people their money.

If they are depending now upon the goodwill of the members of the general public in order to keep the buses on the road and keep the bus services in operation, if they are going to depend on the investing public of Barbados and outside for funds to operate the buses from day to day, buy new units and matters of that kind, at least they should be honest enough to tell the people that the Transport Board is not going to be liable as a Statutory Corporation for these loans, but only the taxpayers of Barbados will be liable. The Transport Board is going to continue to have the best of both worlds.
6.45 p.m.

They can continue submitting a deficit Balance Sheet; they can continue to show a loss after the end of September and nobody would be able to go and sell out the buses for debt because they say that the Government will be responsible. This has cost us \$2 million officially. I would like to emphasize the word "officially." It is \$1,900,000 but, as you know, it is very close on \$2 million in the last four years. That is a drain by process of simple arithmetic at the rate of \$500,000 per annum. How long do they think the people in Barbados are going to put up with this?

Sir, you will find in that debate the question of audit. It was raised four and a half years ago in the same debate on the Resolution earlier in the day for \$30,000. What did the Government do then?

I do not think that it is fair to the taxpayers of this island that they should be called upon to underwrite the

Cost of printing amendments of this nature when all of this could have been done on the first occasion when the Transport Board Bill was first discussed in this Chamber.

I share the view put forward by the hon. senior member for St. Peter that if you are going to have a statutory corporation, it should be free from political intrigue and influence. Only the people who think that Almighty God has given them the pre-ordained right to preside in Barbados over the unfortunate people of this island forever and ever would attempt to carry out a policy with the personnel of the Transport Board as they are pursuing at the present moment, because if they were not imbued with that idea they would realise that the bell would be tolling for them and they would not have to ask for public confidence. It is a matter of public and general knowledge that some of the personnel of the Transport Board have been elected on two qualifications alone: on unsuccessful management in business life, and slavish adherence to the Government Party. I do not care how many guarantees you give as a Government to the general public, if the way in which the Board is being managed does not inspire confidence amongst the people inside and outside of this island and if you do not have people presiding over the policy of the Board who would inspire that confidence, no matter how many times you issue a prospectus or you call on the public for subscriptions on debentures, no matter how much the Treasury of Barbados is prepared to underwrite the Transport Board, if you do not have proper people running the buses and the buses making a profit, no investor is going to lend the Board one red cent. It stands to reason that if the Transport Board is now an integral part of the Government of this island to the extent that the Treasury of Barbados is liable for defection and mismanagement of the Transport Board, that may bankrupt the island; so it only depends on which end of the telescope you are looking through. What about the other heavy commitments we have before us? A few months ago the Natural Gas Corporation issued a prospectus for \$300,000 and they have not raised it yet. That is still backed by the Barbados Treasury.

If the amendments which are now before this Committee are to serve the purpose of only covering up the intention to continue the present policy of raiding the Treasury under the guise of guarantees against debentures, I would like to warn the Government that the taxpayers in Barbados will not put up with it for very long.

The question that Clause 3 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 4 was called and passed.

On motion of Hon. R. G. MAPP, seconded by Hon. D. D. GARNER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. SPEAKER, the passing of the Bill in Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. R. G. MAPP, seconded by Hon. D. D. GARNER in each case, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

6.55 p.m.

THE ADJOURNMENT

The Order Paper having been fixed.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that February 23rd, Federation Day, is a Bank Holiday, I am prepared to move that this House do now adjourn until Wednesday, 24th February, 1960, at 12 o'clock (Noon). I now formally beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Wednesday, 24th February, 1960, at 12 o'clock Noon.

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

The question that this House do now adjourn until Wednesday 24th February, 1960 at 12 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

6.58 p.m.