

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1971 - 76

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(OFFICIAL REPORT) FIRST SESSION OF 1971-76 HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 6th August, 1974.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.05 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

Hon. C. E. TALMA, C.B.E., (Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the House); Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON, (Minister without Portfolio); Hon. R. St.C. WEEKES, J.P., (Temporary Minister of Communications and Works); Mr. W. R. LOWE, J.P., (Chairman of Committees); His

Honour C. A. E. HOPPIN, (Deputy Speaker); Hon. P. G. MORGAN, C.B.E., (Minister of Tourism, Information and Public Relations); Hon. P. M. GREAVES, B.A., (Minister of Housing, Lands, Labour and National Insurance); Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE, (Minister of Health and Welfare); and Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A.(Econ.), (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport).

Prayers were read.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minutes of this Honourable House for Tuesday, the 23rd July, 1974, are before you for confirmation. If there are no corrections or alterations, the Minutes will be confirmed. (Pause). These Minutes are hereby confirmed.

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS and Mr. W. C. B. HINDS entered the Chamber and took their seats.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I am commanded to lay the Financial (Amendment) Rules, 1974; The Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for two months ended 31st May, 1974; and the Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for three months ended 30th June, 1974.

On my own behalf, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Report on Vital Statistics and Registrations for the year 1971.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Barbados Harbours Act, 1960.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Bill to provide for the incorporation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados and for connected purposes.

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Post Office Act, 1911.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Barbados Harbours Act, 1960 be now read a first time.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to provide for the incorporation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados and for connected purposes be now read a first time.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Post Office Act, 1911 be now read a first time.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORAL REPLY TO QUESTION

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to inform you that the Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 267, asked by you, Sir, is now ready.

Mr. C. L. BOLDEN, and Mr. L. S. CRAIG entered the Chamber and took their seats.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Government Business be now taken.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42, 43, and 44 be suspended for the remainder of the Day's Sitting.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. C E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 4 standing in the name of the Hon. Minister of Housing, Lands, Labour and National Insurance be the First Order of the Day.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the first of other Resolutions to come before this Honourable Chamber for the purpose of vesting land in the National Housing Corporation, that are now in the legal ownership of Government. Such lands, Sir, as - this one -relate to Wildey. The others will relate to lands in St. George - Bellair Plantation - Parish Hill in Christ Church, and maybe one or two others.

This is for some 47 acres that we are now proposing to vest in the National Housing Corporation for housing purposes. At the moment Sir, we are now carrying out some construction on this land. When the Wildey Plantation was acquired probably some seven or more years ago, it was always the intention that the Wildey Plantation should have a multiple use; not only should it be used for agricultural purposes as it was at that time, but it should also be used for housing purposes, industrial purposes, and indeed other purposes of Government, and, housing is a purpose of the Government.

We are now in the process of developing this land at Wildey. We have there about ten to twelve acres on which are cited several low middle-income houses. This is the first time that an attempt has been made to provide houses for this section of the community, because such persons were at one time debarred from applying for housing, or applying to the Housing Corporation for assistance, because of their high income, and, at the same time their income was not high enough to enable them to apply to The Barbados Mortgage Finance Company for assistance to purchase a house. This is a gap that we have sought to bridge, and we have built 83 houses at Wildey, of the lower middle-income type, where we hope that those persons earning an income in the bracket that disqualifies them at the moment from applying for a National Housing Corporation house. Of course, people who earn probably somewhere up to about \$450 a month, can qualify for these houses.

We are also in the process of constructing there at least 336 multiple units. These are for rentals. At the moment 112 such units have been completed and we are now in the process of working on the 224 others. There is also another area of land reserved for siting just under 200 chattel houses at Wildey, and we hope that work will begin probably before this year is ended. Now these houses will be also for sale to low income persons. There are 190 such houses for low income persons, and indeed the houses for rentals are for low-income persons. There are also 336 houses that are under construction at this moment, at Wildey.

There is also an area which, I think, we have agreed to let the Natural Gas Corporation have for siting their offices there, and an area for shopping purposes.

So all in all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the 47 acres will have a multiple use. There will be enough room there on another section for purposes of recreation,

Sir, I beg to move that this Resolution to vest these 47 acres of land in the National Housing Corporation do now pass.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

12.15 p.m.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one cannot quarrel with the question of the transfer of land to the National Housing Corporation as such, but what worries me particularly is the statement made by the Honourable Minister regarding the variation of the houses according to foundation tests. I wonder if we are going to run into the same problem as we have just witnessed in respect of the National Cemetery? I would warn the Government at this stage, that they should take a serious look at any building operations which they would be carrying out in this country in the future in order to avoid the unnecessary waste of much needed capital.

With regard to the question of foundations in this country, I feel that this matter is not dealt with seriously. I have seen some of the houses at the Wildey site, and I am at this moment still a bit perturbed at the system of building them. You will find that foundation levels have already changed. There is a complete waste, in my humble opinion, of space in some of these houses. Last week the Honourable Minister of Health referred to tests which were carried out and issued by the Research Centre of the Caribbean. Anybody who has had dealings with Town and Country Planning will know that the Town and Country Planning is also operating on these so called maps which are completely erroneous.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know of a particular case where the Town and Country Planning Officer told me that a particular area of land was agricultural land. I pointed out to him that there were no more than eight inches of top soil, and he said that he was nothing to do with that because the maps stated that the land was agricultural land. I am now living on a piece of land in St. Philip which had been turned down by the Town and Country Planning Department because of what was stated in one of the soil maps, which pointed out that it was good agricultural land. I would ask the Minister to warn his Department to be very cautious in dealing with what is stated in these maps. Several people have already mentioned that these maps are not correct. Even the, Right Honourable Prime Minister has stated that they had to go down 32 feet in order to find a foundation at the National Cemetery.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this matter goes back to the Annual Accounts of the Housing Authority in respect of the Silver Hill Scheme, where you will find that houses were constructed and the contractors had to return and ask for more money because the foundation could not be found at a certain level. If the Minister is going to give out these things on contract, then the documents will be very large. I feel that the Town and Country Planning Office should make their decisions based on foundation tests before allowing the Government to deal with the question of building houses in this haphazard manner. I think that the Minister should take a careful note of what is happening in the building programme. He can go back and check his records for the Silver Hill site, and he will find that, contractors have asked for more money, despite the fact that they had contracted under certain terms and conditions. He should take note of this and insist that, on every plot of land where buildings are to be constructed particularly those to be built by the Government, foundation tests should be carried out.

With regard to soil tests, I am no specialist, but I would argue with the specialist that soil tests have nothing to do with the building of houses. Soil tests have something to do with the quality of the soil when you are growing crops, looking after drainage, and so on, but they have nothing to do with

foundation tests. If the specialist is giving the Government this sort of information, then they should be bold and big enough to call in a Consultant to tell them if the specialist is right or wrong. We cannot afford, in these very hard times, to keep throwing away money, as we have done on the national disgrace at Warrens. This will be remembered for all time. They cannot salvage anything up there now. I could not believe that people in the 1970's would attempt to build a Chapel with 2 inch blocks with glass windows in it, as has been designed for the National Cemetery up there, and then come here and tell us that they carried out soil tests but not foundation tests. You do not build on the quality of the soil, but you build on where the foundation level is,

The Question that the Resolution do now pass, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

THE HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS (SALES TAX) BILL, 1974.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the next Order which the Government proposes to deal with is, Order No. 5 which stands in the name of the Right Hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and it is to move the Second Reading of a Bill to provide for the imposition of a tax on the proceeds of the letting of hotel accommodation and the sale of food and beverages in hotels and restaurants and for connected purposes.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Are you asking for leave to deal with this matter?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

I am asking for leave to deal with this Item, in the absence of the Prime Minister.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Leave has been sought by the Leader of the House to deal with this Item.(Pause.) Leave is granted.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as hon. Members will recall, this is part of the Budgetary Proposals presented by the Prime Minister when he said inter alia

"I have decided to revise the present method of taxing hotel operations in this country. After very careful study and evaluation of the results of the 4% tax on gross profits, I propose to substitute for this a 5% tax on the cost of hotel rooms, food and beverages. I have reached this decision for the following two main reasons:

(1) In order to establish a tax system which is more in conformity with systems in operation elsewhere and which will be easier for the potential investor to take into account in making economic forecasts.

(2) In order to increase the yield of taxation from this important sector of the economy by ensuring that all hotels will now fall within the ambit of the tax, and not only those which have been in operation for more than four years as is the case under present legislation..."

It is estimated that more taxation will be secured that way. This Bill also includes the sales of food and beverages in restaurants as well as in hotels.

In the Bill, hon. Members will observe, that the tax applies to any building or group of buildings within the same precincts, containing not less than 10 bedrooms for the accommodation of guests for reward. 12.25 p.m.

All hotels, apartments, guesthouses, condominiums with a minimum of ten bedrooms which offer sleeping accommodation, food and beverage for reward, will come under this Act and will have to be registered by the Commissioner of Inland Revenue. The tax will be collectable from the operator of the various hotels, restaurants, and guesthouses that have accommodation of not less than 10 bedrooms. The operators of these hotels, restaurants and guesthouses will be acting as agents for the Government in the collecting of this tax and will be responsible for collecting it and having it paid over to Government at the stipulated time. It is the intention of the Minister of Finance to exclude small shops, market stall sellers and pedlars in order to avoid the burden of taxation which will be thrown on them and which would affect the low income groups more so.

In the Bill, special provision has been made to exclude mobile restaurants, ships' and aircrafts' restaurants. In the case of numerous small shops, they are not absolutely exempt as such, but provision has been made whereby the operator of such a small establishment will be invited to apply to the Minister of Finance and Planning for exemption from the operation of this Act, so that in the case of a small shop, the shopkeeper can apply for exemption from the operation of the entire Act; so that the small operators will be given some measure of relief.

Now the administration of the Act will be the responsibility of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, and the Act has 23 sections which are worded in accordance with the standard type of legislation in other places. It is intended that the Act should come into force on 1st September, 1974. This Bill has been overdue because this was mentioned in the speech of the Minister of Finance in 1973, but it is only now being brought into force. The returns for the entire year of 1973 will be available and it will be possible to meet this tax, but in future years, it will be made up to the 1st March, 1974.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the provisions of the Bill are straightforward. It is hoped that this will be a more equitable way of collecting tax than the old system which was based on a 4% profit. This will be on the gross returns.

I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, without any disrespect to the able way in which the Leader of the House has presented the file on this matter, I think I may safely say that the House would be better informed if the Minister of Finance himself had come and explained one or two things. The first thing that it is necessary to explain surely would be why after having given consideration to this matter, after having taken the decision - because I believe the Leader of the House is quite right in saying that a decision was

taken last year to take off the 4% tax from the gross revenue of the hotels, — he as Minister of Finance was unable to enforce the decision immediately upon presenting it to the House in a Budget Speech, for this is what has happened. The removal of the 4% gross charge and the substitution of a sales tax has not been put into force because, I submit, of the inefficiency of the Ministry of Finance.

For a long time we have been told that it is essential for the proper operation of hotels in Barbados that the earnings which the Government wishes to receive from the hotel industry as a contribution to general revenue should be charged to the guests rather than to the hotels. The fact that our political party a year ago said that this should be done is now history, and I think the Leader of the House would find that it was not in last year's Budget, but in last year's Reply to the Budget that this tax was suggested. It was not what the Prime Minister said. It is what the hon. Member for St. James said in his Reply that has been accepted by the Prime Minister in the course of this year, and yet having had a whole year to consider the suggestions made by the hon. Member for St. James, the Shadow Minister of Tourism, and accepting them, the Prime Minister has been unable to give the hotels the relief which they wished at the time when he announced it.

There are other pointers also to the fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this move had been in the air for a long time. It is an open secret that the Spanish Hotel Group, which wished to build a hotel at Chancery Lane and which had been announcing for a year and a half in Europe that it planned to build a Hotel in Barbados, refused to come to Barbados until the 4% tax on gross revenue was removed, and it is also widely, I cannot say, rumoured, I have to say, alleged, that the Minister of Information, it may be of Tourism as well, gave those responsible, an assurance that that tax was due to be removed, and this is certainly some time before the Budget ! came down actually removing the tax. Therefore, this thing has been in the oven for a long time, and I repeat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is an indictment of the gross inefficiency of the Ministry of Finance that a tax put on after mature consideration, could not be enforced by the Ministry as soon as it was properly before the House.

Now it is not only the words of the Opposition which should be heeded in this regard, I do not give very much weight to any pronouncement by Mr. Stephen Edwards, but he is the President of the Barbados Hotels Association. The Government and the Ministry of

Finance have come over.....(Asides) — I understand that he is the ex-President of the Association, but whichever President it is, it may be Mr. Donawa, — severe criticisms have been directed at the Government in respect of this very matter, because the Hotel Association which undoubtedly has been feeling its oats since it won so signal a victory over the Barbados Workers' Union in the matter of the workers' wages, has also been feeling its oats because it thought that it had won a victory over the Government in the matter of the 4% tax, but then it found out that the victory was to be somewhat delayed in its application. It had, so to speak, to await the signing of the peace treaty or ratification of the peace treaty, which treaty is now before the House. I mention this to show, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there has been very general criticism of the Government at the length of time which this Act has taken to come before Parliament. 12.35 p.m.

Now, in my Budget Reply I did not find time to deal with the question of hotel taxes and the question of the contribution which tourism should make to the general revenue; and I want to take a short moment or two to deal with it at this stage.

We in the Barbados Labour Party have long advocated that tourism, as the major industry of this country, should also carry the major tax burden. For a long time we advocated this in the days when sugar was very depressed. There may be a temporary alleviation of the condition of agriculture and the Sugar Industry of this island — perhaps somewhat exaggerated prices, the highest sugar prices in history, higher even than those prevailing at the end of the first World War; but in the long run it will be found, I suggest, that you cannot run a country if its revenue pattern does not reflect the earning pattern of the country's industries.

You cannot run a country on the basis that one of its major industries is going to have to carry less of the tax burden than a more minor industry, and you therefore have to ask yourselves where are the major earnings to be found in the hotel business at the present time.

Now, I am going to say something, Sir, that may seem very brave; but I accept many of the figures which are given by hoteliers as to the low profits which they are making. I am prepared to accept those figures, and I can refer hon. Members, if they are interested to read the recent surveys made by the UWI about these very points of the Hotel Industry in Barbados; but the fact that the day to day earnings may be sufficient only to pay salaries. All salaries are not by any means on a low level, Sir, and the salaries of expatriate hotel managers are still very high because they do not only receive salaries in Barbados, but I believe that they receive perks outside Barbados in one or two tax free havens not many thousands of miles away from our shores either.

But, Sir, the earnings are sufficient to pay the salaries, and to return, I think, only a minimal of the rate at the present time on apparent invested capital; but that does not mean that the owners of hotels will soon be carrying their begging bowls in Broad Street. People are running hotels in this country as much for the capital gain upon selling the hotels as the day to day return. This is an open and acknowledged fact.

People are prepared to take a small return on operating hotels, especially the medium sized hotels, in the expectation that in the fullness of time they will be able to sell the hotel at a handsome capital profit; and I am suggesting to the Prime Minister that there is a case for a Capital Gains Tax which applies particularly to the sale of hotel assets and hotel businesses which have benefited under tax exemption legislation in this island and which have become very much more valuable by reason of their establishment and holding on for the first few years of their tax holidays.

There is a very strong case, I am suggesting, that when hotels, which import their furnishings duty free and which receive all the encouragement from the hotels' incentive legislation that at present exists, that are sold, especially if they are sold after the end of a tax holiday period when they are no longer receiving exemptions, that the purchase price should attract some measure of Capital Gains Tax, and I will emphasise this, particularly where they are sold under such conditions as necessitate the obtaining of an Exchange Control Licence. In other words when there should be a Capital Gains they are sold to foreigners, and even more when they are sold by foreigners to other foreigners; because if there is any seriousness about preserving Barbados for Barbadians, if the Prime Minister was genuine when he said that one of these days we will wake up to find out that we no longer own our own country you wish to place every financial disincentive possible to the sale or further sale of any Barbadian owned assets or any assets located in Barbados.

It may be necessary for a healthy hotel industry to make it possible and easily possible for hotels to change hands where it comes to the issuing of licences. What we should be more concerned about in a time of inflation especially, is protecting Barbadians at large, Barbadians who are owners of land, Barbadians who have to compete for construction resources of the land with foreigners coming from much richer countries than ours.

What we should be concerned about is not letting the profits which result from inflation to be exported from Barbados. That is doing Barbados very little good in the long run, and the best person to cream off, or the best body to cream off more of these profits by way of a Capital Gains Tax is, I submit, the Government of Barbados and not any private individual, least of all a private individual resident outside of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I dare say that there are other persons whose speeches will deal with the question of restaurants; and I appreciate what the Leader of the House said and the reassurance that he has given to the very many small restaurateurs of Barbados that it will be possible for them to obtain exemption from the sales tax.

I could only say — and we have pressed for this in respect of numerous other items that come before the House from time to time — that the Minister of Finance or the Commissioner of Inland Revenue or whoever is dealing with it, should issue directives indicating the exact range within which these applications are going to be accepted. I do not believe that I am praising anybody in the Ministry of Finance or the Minister in saying this.

I believe that it is a matter of commonsense that you cannot penalise hotel restaurants by making them charge a 5 per cent sales tax while their competitors who do not have to be operating hotels, establishments with more than 10 rooms and so on, do not have to pay the 5 per cent tax. I am not in favour of encouraging the higher class restaurants, restaurants where with a dinner for two, you will get no change out of a hundred dollar bill. I am not in favour of encouraging those at the expense of hotels because I believe that hotels in the end are doing a more valuable job for Barbados.

But, Sir, there must be some way by which the small restaurateur who is carrying on a business here in Bridgetown and helping people to get something to eat in the middle of the day, or the lady who sells fish in Baxter's Road, or the shop keeper who cuts off a slice of ham or sells you a chicken leg at Eagle Hall, know that if they apply to the Ministry of Finance they will get an exemption. Merely to say that they can apply may only spread alarm and disappointments.

I am worried about some aspects of what I see here. I am worried when I see that the exemption order must be put in a conspicuous position on the premises. What happens indeed to the lady who sells fish in Baxter's Road? Is she to hang the exemption order on to the coal pot, or put it on a box in front of her, or perhaps clip it on to the paper from which she wraps up the fish? But that is a detail with which I am sure the Prime Minister will deal in the fullness of time.

Where it comes to the protection of these small restaurants that are not in direct competition with the hotels more is needed than just to say that a form in the manner approved by the Minister may be issued.

I would go further. There is an arrangement for the payment of land tax to apply to a Tax Relief Board

and to appeal if necessary if you do not get your taxes relieved on the grounds of poverty. I would suggest that the Minister should be prepared to set himself rules. It would make his own task much easier; because once the case is within the rules, the operation, the application can easily be designated to a trusted Civil Servant. The Minister should set himself rules within which he could delegate the authority for issuing these exemption orders and permit an appeal if necessary for a restaurant which is aggrieved and which feels that it is taxed too much because it does not do the amount of business or does not meet the conditions for taxability into which others may more obviously fall. 12, 45 p.m.

It is also easy at the present time, Sir, to lose sight of the importance that small business has always played in the aspirations of Barbadians who wish to lift themselves above the lowest income level. The keeping of parlours and restaurants has traditionally been the means of raising yourself a little more. I very much hope that the Prime Minister as Minister of Finance will bear all of this in mind, and will harken to the words, which I hope are words of commonsense, that have proceeded or will proceed from the Opposition benches on this matter today.

Hon. P. G. MORGAN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would firstly, refute the allegation which was made by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that I told any.....

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I made no allegation. I said "that have been made." I made no allegation. I am giving the hon. Member every chance to say that he did not tell other people, but he did not tell me nor did he tell anybody who told me. So let him deal with the allegations. They are his friends' allegations; not mine.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The point is made.

Hon. P. G. MORGAN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the allegation, which the Leader of the Opposition says has been made by friends of mine, whoever they may be, is quite untrue and incorrect. I am surprised at him, indeed, for I think he knows me well enough to know that even if I had had some information prior to the Budget, that such a tax would be changed that I would be so foolish or so indiscrete as to tell any company, any individual or anyone, that such a measure might be in the offing.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition asked why it was, and laid blame on the Ministry of Finance for the fact that this measure was not brought to this House sooner, following the Budget, and I am very surprised that he has made this criticism because he knows well enough how matters relating to Budgets work. He indeed has answered a great deal of his own questions. A matter concerned with the Budget could hardly be discussed with the people who are involved, such as the Hotel Association, restaurants and others, as to the workings of the proposals which were to be implemented. They could not possibly be discussed with those people before the Budgetary announcements were made, and after those Budgetary announcements were made, there were certain complications which were obviously there, most of which the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has detailed himself. If restaurants were to be included, how indeed would the person with a small shop in Baxter's Road be excluded from having to pay this tax? And there were also the mechanics of the forms and returns which were to be made, and

indeed, only last week we dealt with, I think, four other measures which were Budgetary Measures which were far less complicated matters than this implementation of a hotel tax.....

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of explanation. It is a matter that arose in my speech. The hon. Member perhaps did not understand what I was saying. The tax itself has not been imposed. Last week we were confirming a tax which was in operation. This week we are dealing with something which has not yet come into operation. The tax itself has not been imposed.

Hon. P. G. MORGAN:

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one would think that to deal with a tax which had already been imposed and which only needed continuing or amending would be far more simple than introducing a completely new tax. Therefore it is reasonable to understand that this particular tax would take a longer time to be implemented than those which we dealt with last week.

I have commented on these matters because the Hon. Minister of Finance came into the Chamber after these criticisms were made, but I have no doubt however that he would wish on his own, to speak about things concerning the Ministry of Finance.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, sometime ago — I believe it was last year — I had a committee looking into this whole question of the imposition of a tax on the persons who patronize the hotels in this Island, in substitution for the tax which the Government had imposed on the industry itself; and I have been holding discussions with them from time to time, but as the Minister of Tourism and Information has pointed out, you do not discuss matters from the point of view of saying that you are going to change the incidence of the tax or the direction in which it would be levied, and it took a considerable amount of time because it would mean amending the existing legislation.

We could not collect two taxes. If we did not repeal — we could possibly under the Provisional Collection of Revenue Act in the four-month period, collect tax at the rate of five percent from the guests of the hotels but the difficulty would be that one would have had to repeal the old tax before one had decided the extent to which this tax should go; and the major difficulty here was the question of the restaurants and places which would be outside of the immediate orbit of the hotels, for the reason which the hon. Member for St. Thomas, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition himself has adverted to.

So the question of the length of time it takes, depends on the kind of legislation one has to deal with, and how many interests one has to consult to see whether one has any objections, as there have been regularly from time to time.

Now I am going to say right here and now that there should be no difficulty in the waiver of the tax in favour of small shopkeepers and so on, and people who sell bread and fish, and even the people in Baxter's Road because we have carried out a census in the Ministry of Finance of all the restaurants that are in the Island, and we know the restaurants on which we are going to impose the tax, and I have a list of them here. Now if any of them apply, they are not going to get any exemption, but none of the restaurants as far as I can see from the list, are in Baxter's Road; and somebody selling shark or dolphin out of a coal pot is not deemed to be a restaurant within the meaning of the Act; neither will we seek to

impose the tax on mobile restaurants or people who sell or cater to the public in either of the public markets in this Island.

But, we have the list here, so the

Commissioner will not have any difficulty. It is not a question of whether you have your DLP card or your DLP passport. The Commissioner will have the list of people from whom the tax is to be collected, and it is here; and if you are not on the list, you do not have to pay. 12.55 p.m.

Generally speaking, we have tried to draw up this list in this manner. Where persons who are capable of giving receipts and keeping books and accounts, people who deal in bulk purchasing, and have portion control and so on, can pay the tax because they have accounting procedures, but if a person is selling out of a tray, or at the side of a rum shop, then it would be a waste of their time and ours. We know that they are not going to keep books; so there is no point in our trying to impose a tax on people who may be capable of paying to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue the just portion of the cost of a meal which, after all, is not an imposition on the owner or operator of the restaurant but an imposition on the person who is taking the meal.

Now, you would be opening this whole scheme to exploitation by people who do not keep books, if we tried to spread the net too far and to bring in a lot of people who, we know traditionally, even for the purposes of their own income tax, do not keep books. No matter how you talk to them, no matter how you set up the Institute of Management and Productivity in order to get these people to keep books they are not going to keep books. What they would be doing is collecting the tax, but we would not be able to prove that they have collected the tax because they would not be keeping any receipt books or any bills. (Asides.)

All I can say is that the list extends from Alexandra's to the Palm Tree Bar in Fairchild Street. (Asides.) It goes to the Virginian. I do not see anything beginning with Z. Palm Tree is the last one, but it is not the last alphabetically because it goes on to the Virginian and the Wilson group. (A VOICE: Robbies) That one would come under the Gambling Act and not only the restaurant licence. We will have to collect gambling tax from that particular one. I have heard a lot of names bandied about on the other side, so I think we would get more money from them the other way. Their cuisine is not notorious or well known in this Island

Broadly speaking, I want to emphasise that it is not going to be in the discretion of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue in the wide sense of the term that he would say to one, go and to another one 'come. He will not have to go and look and have a meal and say that this is the kind of meal you should pay tax on, or anything like that. We have a list of the places. They are the larger establishments in Barbados, and the ones that we know would be able to keep proper accounts. That is our main concern.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The question is that this.....

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise primarily to draw to the attention.....(Asides.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Talma, leave had been sought but you were not present.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

On a point of order, Sir. I sought leave in the absence of the Minister of Finance, but now that he is present, he has replied.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

On what is the hon. Member for St. Joseph speaking? The Second Reading of the Bill?

Mr. BOLDEN:

I am speaking on the Bill.

Mr. DEPWY SPEAKER:

I would ask the hon. Member to make his speech on the Third Reading of the Bill.

Mr. BOLDEN:

With all due respect to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, either rule me out of order,

or I will speak now. We must get something straight. The Hon. Minister of Information got up and misled this House, taking over from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister cannot say that he reserves the right to speak when the Minister of Information has already spoken, too. Who is dealing with the Bill?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Order! I do not agree that the Hon. Minister misled the House.

Mr. BOLDEN:

I am going to point out where he misled the House. If he had the right to speak, then he took over from the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister cannot enjoy two positions.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Will the hon. Member please take his seat!

Mr. BOLDEN:

I will take my seat, but you will have to send me out today.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I have asked the hon. Member to make his speech on the Third Reading of the Bill.

Mr. BOLDEN Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am entitled to speak on the Second Reading of the Bill. You must rule that you are depriving me of my right to speak. That is what I want you to do.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I am asking you to take your seat!

Mr. BOLDEN:

Just rule that, man. (Asides.) But he cannot stop me from speaking. Rule that now/Asides.) Morgan got up to speak for Barrow.....

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, ...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Will both hon. Members please take their seats?

Mr. ADAMS:

On a point of order, Sir. May I very respectfully point out both to hon. Members on the other side and to yourself, Sir, that before the Minister of Finance rose to reply nobody was in a position to know that he was making his Final Reply, because nobody called out.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I was about to put the question.....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

The question was on the verge of being put, and then I replied.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rose on a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Will all Members please take their seats. I was putting the Question that the Bill be now read a Second Time.

Mr. BOLDEN:

You did not put the Question that the Bill be now read a Second Time.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Are you arguing with the Chair? Any further argument with the Chair, and I will ask you to leave this Chamber.

Mr. BOLDEN:

I will leave. I have a right to speak on the Bill.

Mr. ADAMS:

I am still on my point of order, Sir. I was interrupted by the Prime Minister.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Let us have a little order, please!

Mr. ADAMS:

Can I be heard on the point of order?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I will hear you, but the hon. Member for St. Joseph is still making a noise.

Mr. ADAMS:

I cannot hear him, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Well, I can hear him clearly.

Mr. ADAMS:

I cannot hear him now, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

May I hear your point or order.

Mr. ADAMS:

I am only saying that I have been anticipated. The Minister of Information said that, now he sees the Minister of Finance, he would sit down. At that stage Your Honour started to put the question and the Prime Minister got up, but at no stage, as I believe is customary — Your Honour will remember this. Was there the customary look around to see if any other Member was rising to speak, or was there any question that, before you speak, does any other Member wish to contribute? I am only suggesting that, in the circumstances this being the normal course of affairs, the leave of the House could be given for the hon. Member to make his speech, even at the expense of the Prime Minister speaking again. The argument addressed by the Leader of the House that he spoke only in the absence of the Prime Minister would be really to ask the House to give the Prime Minister a chance to make a first speech and not a second one.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

You are also making a second speech.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make this clear. The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance allows a little time to elapse. You nearly put the question, and I made an indication that the Prime Minister wished to reply.

Mr. BOLDEN:

That is not true.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Order! Will you please take your seat. I was putting the question, and I will put the question now.

Mr. CRAIG:

On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I am putting the question that the Bill be now read a Second time.

Mr. BOLDEN:

That is highly dishonest. Mr. CRAIG On a point of order, Sir. Mr. Deputy Speaker rose.

The Question that the Bill be now read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on the Bill

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill. Mr. W. R. LOWE took the Chair. 1.05 p.m.

Clauses 1 to 23 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, the Bill was read a third time passed, and cited as the HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS (SALES TAX) ACT, 1974.

THE AIRLINE SERVICE BUSINESS TAX BILL, 1974

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 6 be the next Order of the Day.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Order No.6 stands in the name of the Right Hon. Prime Minister and it is to move the Second Reading of a Bill to provide for the imposition of a tax on the gross revenue of an airline service business and for related matters.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW; Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill arises out of the Budgetary Proposals which were made in the House on 31st May, 1973, not in this year's Budgetary Proposals. At that time I said that the Government intended to impose a 5% charge on the gross revenue of all commercial

undertakings operating at Seawell International Airport which at the time did not pay any concession fees.

The purpose of this Bill is to make provision for payment by services at the airport which provide for the handling of persons and goods carried by an aircraft operated by an airline, services for the handling of the maintenance of aircraft, and services which provide meals for the consumption of passengers on board aircraft. So there are three different types of services which would be embraced by the provisions of this Bill. Incidentally there are three main services at the airport which would be covered by the provisions of the Bill; Seawell Air Services who act as handling agents for many of the airlines, a new company, Aircraft Service International Limited, which is a subsidiary of Greyhound Lines in the United States, and the Goddard Flight Kitchen. These are the three main services, and the project revenue which we hope to recover from this tax is of the order of \$100, 000 per annum, 145 p.m.

I should like to mention that nearly all the other people who use the airport pay some kind of concession fee, and companies such as Seawell Air Services particularly occupy more of the facilities at Seawell Airport than any other services up there because they occupy a great deal of the ramp. They lease about half acre or three quarters of an acre of land for the purpose of storage of equipment at a very nominal rental. They will have to move very shortly because we need the space for expansion in an easterly and northerly direction of the parking apron,

I happen to know that the revenue from one airline alone, from BO AC, is in excess of \$1 million, and I think that some of the concessionaires who occupy 4, 000 square feet of space in the terminal are paying \$131, 000 a year; and Seawell Air Services has been paying nothing except for the office space. That is the main reason why the charge has been introduced.

Unfortunately in this country there is a superstition that if your business is large enough the Government has to provide things for you, and you can close highways. DaCosta and Company when they used to have longshoremen and lighters used to block off two thirds of the wharf and put a chain across it when they were shuttling cargo into their warehouses at the end of the wharf, and they used to be allowed to do that although there was no provision in the Highways Act to allow them to do it.

Any time that you are going to close a highway you should publish a notice in the Official Gazette. They used to do it three or four times weekly. Now, the same DaCosta and Musson are running an arm at Seawell Air Services, as if they own the place. Anyhow when we get our new terminal we will have a little stricter control. We have just increased the guards up there by 26, and we will allow the people of this country to know that no matter how big a firm is, they have to obey the law in the same way that a small man with what is called the pan cart has to obey the law.

So whether you have big landing steps and a tug to push about 707's or if you have a pan cart, the law is the same for everybody. The old regime before 1961 used to allow them to block off the wharf and there was a big chain. In my constituency, when it was tried by one or two plantation owners, preventing the buses from going down, I went with my St. John people, the younger and more physically fit, and removed the obstructions; but I do not have the authority in St. Michael to do it or I would have removed the chains too.

The way I feel is that the law must be enforced even to the extent that if people are breaking the law,

you should carry out what they call at the university a people's arrest. You do not have to call a policeman, You find a man breaking the law, and if he is a director of a big business put him under arrest if the law provides that he can be arrested. Some of them need arresting. Anyhow, we are not arresting them now, we are only asking them to pay the 5 per cent.

I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, well. I am very glad to hear the Prime Minister say that when you close a highway you must put a notice in the Official Gazette, and that those responsible for closing highways can be arrested by people's arrest; because if I see the Prime Minister in the Sea Rocks Road in the Parish of Christ Church in the constituency where I live I am going to arrest him for closing the Sea Rocks Road, by putting a Coast Guard Station across it without any notice in the Official Gazette.

I had to warn Mr. Phillips when I went to the Coast Guard Station the other day and there were some barrels in the road preventing people from passing, that if I cared to, I would push down the barrels and drive through.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I hope that the hon. Member would be dealing with Item 6. This had nothing to do with Sea Rocks, only airline services.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

I have to advise the hon. Member that he should read the Gazette because he will discover that everything that was required to be done in relation to Sea Rocks Road has been done.

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

I really must apologise to the Prime Minister. I have made a terrible political mistake. I have taken the words of the Minister of Communications and Works as gospel because it was he who came into the House and said that the procedure as far as he knows has never been followed by the Government, that it was not followed in Sandy Lane and that it has not been followed yet. I apologise to the Cabinet for believing the words of the hon. Member for St. Michael South Central. Of course I accept everything the Prime Minister says as gospel.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

May I just tell the hon. Member that whoever said that it was not done in the case of Sandy Lane, I pointed out a time when it had not been done; but you have to publish an abandonment; and if the Minister of Communications said that it was not done in the case of Sandy Lane, I can only presume that he was not in the island. I know that the Leader of the Opposition was not in the island because I pointed out to the Government at that time that they would have to publish a notice of abandonment of Sandy Lane in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

Well, Sir, neither the Prime Minister nor I would be the first people to correct the Hon. Minister of Communications on a question of fact. I will not dwell on the question of the closing of highways for as long as the Prime Minister dwelt on it, nor am I going to go into the parish of St. John nor on the Wharf on Bridgetown. I have dealt with one road. He has had two bites. I am only taking one at the apple of irrelevancy.

The question of tax on the airline service business has been very adequately dealt with and explained by the Prime Minister. I was not present during the Budget last year and I could not recall very well these terms occurring in it; but although the explanation today as to what the tax is intended to cover is adequate, it still comes very late. I think that this must be what the Leader of the House was referring to when he said that it was in last year's Budget but it has only now come before the House.

I would not need to repeat the arguments about the inefficiency of the Ministry at great length, but I am suggesting that if the Prime Minister after all these years only now knows that the Barbados Shipping and Trading's Wing is making a good thing out of the Government, this is a matter of great disgrace to the Ministry of Finance and the Cabinet. If BOAC is paying Seawell Air Services \$1 million a year and upwards, and the Government is only collecting small rates for office space it is a disgraceful criticism of the Ministry of Finance which negotiated such generous terms, and did not review them at an earlier stage.

Seawell Air Services do, as far as I can see, occupy a very great deal of space at the airport. The Prime Minister has never at any stage refrain from criticising British West Indian Airways. The criticisms may be founded on fact or they may be founded upon error, but they flow nonetheless in a never ending stream notwithstanding reputations and accusations such as we were privileged to read in last Saturday's Express which described the Prime Minister's statements as at the least uninformed and perhaps indeed malicious.

But Sir, I do not believe that we can accuse him of being uninformed or malicious in respect of Seawell Air Services. It would be a disgrace, I repeat, if all the facts recited therein are correct. If Seawell Air Services are making this enormous amount out of the airport a very serious wrong indeed has been allowed to continue for a year and a half since last year's Budget.

At any rate, Sir, if it is being taken care of we will have to see what it brings in, in the fullness of time.

The matter to which I would primarily ask the Prime Minister to revert when he comes to reply is the question of the airline meals for consumption in flight. I hold no brief for any big businessman or any group of companies in this country, but I have been told that at the moment the airline service business which carries on a flight kitchen is facing competition from a Trinidad concern somehow connected with BWIA. I am sure that the Prime Minister is involved in all this.....— I beg your pardon.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Involved? I think you should withdraw that.

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

Involved is not the word I mean. What I mean is that he is aware of what is involved. But Your Honour does not have to be so touchy because even if a Minister were involved in a food service

business I do not see that this is anything disgraceful. Ministers practise their professions and carry on their businesses, so I do not see that there is anything reprehensible in it; but I am not suggesting in the slightest

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want on a point of order to make something abundantly clear to the hon. Member. I want to make it 100 per cent clear. I am not involved in any kind of business in this island or outside of it. I am not involved in any food business. If I cook, I cook for my friends and my family and for visitors who may come to my house. That is not being involved in any food business. I have no restaurant business, and no airline business.

Any strictures that I have to make on BWIA are made as a Barbadian and as Minister of Finance and not because I am running anything in competition with Goddards' Flight Kitchen, or BWIA or the Barbados Workers' Union who, I understand, run a business up there. I think it is very insidious for the hon. Member to come here week after week and make a lot of snide remarks, and if he persists with that kind of thing, I will have to deal with him, and he is not going to like it. I warn him that he is not going to like what I have to say. I have been very lenient with the hon. Member because if I had to say what I have to say, he would not be here.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister has made his point. I think that the matter is closed because the Hon. Leader of the Opposition cleared the air and said that he was not saying that the Right Hon. Prime Minister was involved. I took him up immediately as I heard the word. Will you please continue. I think the matter is settled. 1.25 p.m.

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

Sir, the matter is not really clear; if you do not mind me saying so, Sir. I am not in the slightest suggesting that the Prime Minister is involved in any business

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

After hearing your explanation, I agree. Will you please continue?

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

Right. The Prime Minister has said that week after week I come in here and make snide remarks and there is something he could say which if he said it, would stop me from being in here. Now that is a reflection on an honourable Member, because he is accusing me of some conduct which is known to him and which if published abroad would prevent me from being in here; and that, Sir, is a reflection under Standing Order 32 on an honourable Member

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

As far as I know, that is one of the proposed new amendments to the Constitution.

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

What Sir?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Well, it would be similar to the proposed amendments in the Constitution.

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

But, Sir, I do not understand you. The Prime Minister says he knows something about me which if he said it, would stop me from being in here

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Will the hon. Member continue his speech?

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

Is he saying that I am a Minister of Religion, Sir? Because that must be the only one that is not offensive. Is he saying I am a Member of the Senate? He has said that I come in here and make snide remarks week after week. I am trying to make a speech about the Goddards' Flight Kitchen and competition from

Trinidad. I believe the Prime Minister is aware about what I have been saying, and the Prime Minister said that if he said what he knew about me I would not like it, and I would not be in here; and is that Parliamentary? What are you going to tell me now, Sir? Let him go and tell the Chief Justice or whichever of the Judges that he is on speaking terms with.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I would like the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to speak on Item Number 6 which deals with the Airline service business.

Mr. ADAMS:

I am not speaking on Item Number 6. I am speaking on a Bill to provide for the imposition of a tax on the gross revenue of an airline service business and related matters. I do not see Item 6 on this piece of paper, Sir. I am speaking on a Bill. (ASIDES).

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for St. James is not addressing the Chair. Will you please speak in undertones?

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

Think of it that I have to stand up here and hear this. I practise my profession and nobody has ever reported me for tampering with.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Will the Hon. Leader of the Opposition please speak to the Motion.

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

I have never been accused of procuring, perjury, nothing like that, and I must.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Is the hon. Member addressing the Chair?

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

Yes, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

On the Bill relating to the Airline?

Mr. ADAMS:

Yes, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Well, I do not want to hear about procuring, or anything else but the airline tax otherwise. I will ask the hon. Member to take his seat.

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS:

I am speaking on the airline tax, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Well, let me hear you.

Mr. ADAMS:

I believe the Prime Minister is aware of a Trinidad business which — I do not know the facts and I am not in a position to know of the facts because I am not holding any brief, political or professional, for any of the parties concerned - my information is, that a certain number of airlines are being offered more generous terms for the supply of airline meals in Trinidad — due to matters of influence, I would have to say, Sir, as well as matters of tax exemption, than is possible in Barbados at the present time, and I am further informed that the imposition of the charge upon the airline meal consumption business may make it that much more difficult for Barbados to compete successfully in the matter of supplying airline meals.

If there is a comment which the Prime Minister can make about it I am sure hon. Members of this House will be glad to hear it. It may very well be that this is just businessmen squabbling because somebody else is able to provide a cheaper deal than they, but if there is any element that there is a business in Trinidad which is receiving some kind of tax exemption and which is using its association with British West Indian Airways to undercut businesses that have no such type of association, I would ask the Prime Minister to look at this as a matter where the exemption provisions which this Act contains should not be imposed, or whether he might not consider dealing with the matter in the short term even if not in the long, as a special case as it affects Seawell Airport and Barbados.

The Question that the Bill be now read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on the Bill.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill Mr. W. R. LOWE took the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 21 inclusive were called and passed. 1.35 p.m.

The Schedule was called and passed.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Your Honour do now report the passing of one Bill in Committee.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER who resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the AIRLINE SERVICE BUSINESS TAX ACT, 1974.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today, but there is a Reply standing in the name of the Hon. Minister of Education, Community Development and Sport which was asked by Your Honour. I do not know if you would like to have it given or laid. It is purely a matter for you to decide. I apologise for having suggested that Your Honour is not in a position to ask Supplementary Questions, but Your Honour may indicate whether you want the reply to be laid or held over.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member for St. George South has been granted permission to ask the Question standing in my name.

QUESTION TIME Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Question No. 267.

RE THE INADEQUACY OF PLAYING FIELD FOR ST. GEORGE GIRLS' SCHOOL, ST. GEORGE

Mr. LOWE:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport Is the Minister aware that the pupils of St. George Girls' School are without an adequate playing field? Will the Minister take steps to acquire the land immediately above the school and adjacent to it from the Valley Plantation for the purpose of extending the present playing field?

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 267 is as follows

"I am aware of the need for a playing field for the pupils of St. George Girls' School and in this connection negotiations are in progress with the owners of the Valley Estate for the acquisition of approximately two acres of land adjacent to the school."

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I have been informed that Question No. 244 was left over from the 23rd July, 1974. This Question stands in the name of the hon. Member for St. Lucy.

**RE THE REQUEST FOR PLAYING FIELD AND
COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR CRAB HILL,
ST. LUCY**

Mr. E. E. GREAVES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport Is the Minister aware that the Youths of Crab Hill, St. Lucy are in urgent need of a proper playing field and a Community Centre; at present, they are forced to use the uneven and undeveloped portion of land at the back of Selah Primary School; the deficiencies mentioned above seriously affect their performances? Will the Minister take steps to ensure that the youths of Crab Hill are provided with a playing field and Community Centre as soon as possible.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 244 is as follows

"1. Yes, Sir. It is this Ministry's policy to provide playing fields and recreational facilities for all areas of the island within the limits of its available financial resources.

2. Yes, Sir.

3. Yes, Sir.

4. Yes, Sir."

Mr. E. E. GREAVES:

Can the Minister state how soon the facilities mentioned in the Question will be provided?

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not possible for me, at this stage, to state how soon these facilities will be provided, but I can assure the hon. Member that they will be taken within the context of their overall provision of improved recreational facilities in the country.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this concludes Government Business, subject to any matter which hon. Members may wish to raise. (Pause.)

I beg to move that the House do now adjourn to Tuesday, 20th August, 1974, at twelve o'clock noon.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 1.45 p.m.