

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, 20th August, 1974

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 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); Mr. J. B. SPRINGER; 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) and Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ,), (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport).

Prayers were read.

Mrs. G. L. JEASTMOND, Messrs. / M. G. M. ADAMS, W. C. B. MINDS attd H. de.B. FORDE entered the Chamber and took their seats.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minutes for Tuesday, the 30th July, 1974 and for Tuesday, the 6th August, 1974 are before you for confirmation. If there are no corrections, the Minutes will be confirmed. (Pause.) There being no corrections, the Minutes are duly confirmed.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow, I am commanded to lay

(1) An Account of the Transactions in Rum in the several Districts of the island for the quarter ending 30th June, 1974;

(2) The Customs (Amendment) Regulations, 1974;

and on my own behalf,

The Report of the Registrar of Trade Unions for the year 1973-74.

Hon. R. St.C. WEEKES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay

(1) The Statement showing sums advanced to the Postmaster General for the payment of Money Orders for the months of February to June, 1974.

(2) The Statement showing Money Order Transactions through the Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administrations for the months of February to June, 1974.

GOVERNMENT NOTICE

Hon C. E TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1964 (Act 1964-23).

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICE

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Motion

Whereas the Government is seeking to introduce amendments to the entrenched and other clauses of the Constitution of Barbados without a proper consultation with the Opposition and other bodies or groups of citizens who may be interested in such amendments;

And Whereas there is wide spread public disquiet at this step;

Be It Resolved that this House calls on the Government to take all steps to set up a Constitutional Commission Consisting of persons with recognised qualifications and distinctions in Barbados or other parts of the Commonwealth Caribbean to hear and receive evidence and make recommendations for what, if any, amendments are necessary or appropriate to the Constitution of Barbados at the present time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, although this is not a notice of a particular Motion, I would wish to alert hon. Members on the Government benches of the permission which has been granted to me on the adjournment to speak on the prospective increase in the price of petroleum and petroleum products in Barbados. (Asides.) On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Are you listening to asides? We are not dealing with asides.

Mr. ADAMS:

I am not quarrelling, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Clerk has already called the next Order.

Mr. ADAMS:

The form in which this was handed to me says "prospective", but, as far as I am concerned, speculative or prospective is just as good a word; whichever the word the Minister would like to debate, I am quite happy with.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I hope the hon. member will have no more controversy over words.

FIRST READING OF BILL

Hon. C. E. TALMte.Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1964 (Act 1964-23) 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 REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

I also beg to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 185 asked by the hon. member for Christ Church West is ready.

Also Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 216 asked by the hon. member for St. Peter is ready.

Also Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 217 asked by the same hon. member is ready.

Also Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 232 asked by the hon. member for St. Joseph is ready.

Hon.L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice that Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 214 asked by the hon. member for St. Peter is ready.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE GRANTED

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to ask for leave of absence for six weeks with effect from the 29th August for myself. I do not know if the Leader of the House would like to join me in this.

Hon. C. E. TALMA.:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I follow the example of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition in asking for leave for myself from the performance of my duties in this House for three weeks commencing on the 29th August, 1974.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Leader of the House has asked for three weeks leave commencing from the 29th August, 1974. The Leader of the Opposition seeks leave for six weeks commencing also on the 29th August, 1974. (Pause.) There being no objection, the leave for the two hon. Members is granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42, 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting, subject to the usual undertaking which is given to the Opposition to raise any matter of public importance which they consider should be dealt with.

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 Government Business be now taken.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and waived til the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. C. E. TALN/ft:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 1 which stands in the name of the Hon. Minister without Portfolio be the First Order of the Day. It is to move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Barbados Harbours Act, -1960.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

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

THE BARBADOS HARBOURS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1974

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the responsibility for port management, including harbours, shipping, and the Port Department, was formerly under the Minister of Communications and Works, and it has now been transferred to the Prime Minister, who has accepted responsibility for harbours, shipping, and lighthouses. It is now necessary to regularise this matter by amending the Barbados Harbours Act. 12.25 p.m.

It will be necessary therefore to amend the Barbados Harbours Act, and I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

I beg to second that.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the Hon. Minister who has just sat down very well knows that he owes a responsibility to this Honourable House in respect of what Government proposes doing about the Harbour generally. One hears everywhere every now and again of things that are taking place and are about to take place at the Bridgetown Port. Amongst other things we have seen that the Minister has assumed responsibility for the management of the Port. We do not for one moment hesitate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to give support to any measure such as this if it means that in having the Honourable Minister directly responsible for its management, it is going to increase police vigilance and so remove a lot of the thieving that we have known from time to time to have gone on at the Bridgetown Port. Having a Minister charged with this responsibility, we would even hope that it would mean in the long run that when the Police are in possession of evidence of crimes that have been committed in the Port it would serve as a means of urging upon the police their responsibility to have all the evidence at their disposal placed before the Courts irrespective of who is the person charged, I have very good reason for saying this.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have known that there have been plans. We do not know if they have been pigeonholed in recent times, but there have been cases where reports have gone out that extension to the Port is to take place, but what you find is that people are able to sit in at some of the meetings at which decisions are made and then immediately get up and go and invest with a view to benefiting from the decisions that Government has taken. We cannot say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how corrupt have been the operations of Government which involves any such undertakings, but believe me, Sir, since the

coming on the scene of Watergate, one never knows how far even in this little country of ours have we seen evidence that would make Watergate look foolish, and we are hoping that with the Minister having the type of responsibility where Port management is now concerned, we will see the removal of any such thing savouring of doubt, and in the long run we hope most of the irregularities that take place in the Port from time to time can be removed or reduced in a very considerable manner. We believe, Sir, that the Honourable Minister must find himself extremely happy, because Ports, their operations, and every thing associated with them have been more or less part and parcel of the makeup of the present Minister who has that responsibility, and I am sure that he brings to bear to his task a wealth of experience; but what we do fear is how far will he be able to exercise, to the benefit of this country, that wealth of knowledge.

One must remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Bridgetown Port was declared open some time in May or June, 1961. As you know, it was constructed for the specific purpose of reducing I the high cost of living in this country, and a very considerable measure of gratitude this entire country owes to the Barbados Labour Party for the construction of this Harbour and the vision associated therewith but; taking into consideration the changes on the world scene and even trying to relate these changes to our specific situation at home, what we do see and know is that why the Bridgetown Port has not been able to make any real impact when it comes to reducing the high living costs is purely and simply a question of the approach to the problem of management of the Port and all that goes on there. We are satisfied,

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Port management is no easy task; it is a very exacting duty, but I do believe that when the Hon. Minister realises, as he must, that it is a national project, I feel that he will feel eventually as concerned as we on this side of the House have always felt on matters which have arisen out of the mismanagement of the Port from time to time. I speak with reference to the treatment meted out to workers at times. These are matters of some very considerable -concern not only to the workers themselves, but to the nation as a whole.

You will recall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the coming into operation of the Bridgetown Port brought an end to the laborious tasks of those lightermen with their long oars and all the hazards associated with crossing the bars to reach the ships that had been anchored outside during the years past. It put an end to lots of other things, but the one thing it has not been able to do is to make living any better for the people of this country in respect of their supplies whether of food, clothing, shelter or whatever it might be, over the years. I well remember the present Minister who is responsible for the management of the Port saying in this House, "Thank God for the Bridgetown Port". This in itself now must have some added meaning because the Honourable Minister now finds himself with full responsibility for matters relating thereto. We do not know if we will be able to say "Thank God for his exercise in management of the Port." This we do not know but he can rest assured that we on this side of the House pledge him our support. 12.35 p.m.

At the same time, we must make this abundantly clear — we are satisfied that the Bridgetown Port can be properly managed without the taxpayers of this country being saddled with the cost of a Minister to undertake this responsibility. In view of the fact that the Minister does not appoint himself, and as long as he has been appointed and we find that he is doing a good job, we on this side pledge him our support, until such time.

Mr. FORDE:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very simple Bill which need not cause much debate in this House, if perhaps, we can be clear in our minds as to the plans which the Government has for the development of Port facilities in Barbados.

What I should like to say is that it is a well recognised constitutional principle that the Prime Minister has the prerogative to choose not only his Ministers, but the subjects which should fall under their respective portfolios; and no doubt in choosing the Minister without Portfolio, he has taken into account the undoubted intimate knowledge and experience which this Minister has in port management and in all things connected with the same.

However, Sir, I should like to say that I think that we should look at the manner in which the Minister of Communications and Works — if I may say so — performed creditably his duties under this portfolio; I am speaking certainly for myself, I would like to record, I believe, this country's gratitude to him for the very short time that he has had in managing this aspect of his ministerial affairs.

I have said before, and I will say it again, that I am particularly happy to say that during his time, workers at the Port were provided with better facilities. I heard the speeches made on that occasion, and I think that both on the side of the employers and the workers' representatives tribute was paid to him. Very seldom do we find it possible in the lifetime of people, particularly in this political life to give them what is due to them.

To move on to the Port itself, the Government must know that there is a great deal of uncertainty in the minds of the present operators of the Port — Port Contractors (Barbados) Limited both now and in the future as regards the management of the Port. I do not think that it is wise that we should go along with this period of uncertainty. It underlines efficiency in management, and leads to a situation which can spill over not only in the efficiency of management, but also in respect of industrial relations at the Port.

There is a rumour that the Government intends to take over full control of the day to day running of the Port affairs. The Government at present is a one-third shareholder in Port Contractors (Barbados) Limited, and whether it now intends to take 51 per cent or 100 per cent of the shares, one does not yet know.

I believe, Sir, that the Government should show some urgency in formulating for the benefit of the country and everyone concerned in its final plans in relation to how the administration of the Port will be organised in the future, and also what plans it has for port expansion.

There are several persons who own lands adjoining the Port and there has been a freeze now for some years on the lands in that area. Certain industrialists, I am told, were anxious to set up certain industrial concerns in that area, but had to shelve their plans pending the Government's final decision,

These matters have been talked about certainly in the last three years of the life of this Parliament and before. No one of us in this House, except those who have access to Government documents, have been able to look into the report given by the Government Consultants, although I believe that the persons more intimately concerned in shipping would have been aware of the conclusions reached by the Consultants.

I again urge the Government to publish its present, if not necessarily its final conclusions, so that the country would know where we are going in the future .

Finally, this affords me the opportunity to say that the industrial relations at the Port at the moment are reaching the point of stalemate* I know that the Minister can, behind the scenes intervene in what is a matter essentially between two trade unions and use his influence before the situation reaches a stage where it can affect the livelihood of the whole country. In this period of inflationary trends in the economy of Barbados, we cannot afford a drawn out period of strike action in the Port or elsewhere; and while we recognise the trade union as a highly responsible body in our community, yet we know that in a fight it will use all the weapons at their disposal. That is understandable; but we should try, if possible to appeal to the employers and to the union to settle their present impasse as soon as possible.

I do not believe, Sir, that this is beyond the capacity of either party to do so. The issue, I understand, surrounds the use of anticipated savings which will result from containerisation. I understand that the Union is contending that some of the savings should be shared among die workers.

I do. not think that this is a situation which we cannot solve without dispute. I am asking Barbadians to put their heads together and not to come to an impasse with tragic consequences to the island as a whole. I hope that the persons possessed of special knowledge and skill in this field will use their influence behind die scenes and effect a speedy and satisfactory settlement. 12.45p.m.

Mr. CRAIG:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my colleague on my left has lauded the Minister for his — I cannot say "outstanding work" because you cannot attach anything outstanding to the Minister. You might say that he has been an outstanding sea captain but at Ministerial level surely, Sir, one cannot give him any credit. I would have thought that we would today be happy to see the Minister relieved of his duties altogether, and therefore save this country the pension, which it would have seemed to be, of \$3, 800 a month to be the Minister of the Port. That is what this whole bill boils down to ~ that the taxpayers of this country are going to be saddled by paying the Minister \$90, 000 over a period of two years, to do what at the Port? There is a Port Manager there already.

There is absolutely nothing the Minister can carry. The Minister can carry no knowledge, no experience in Port duties apart from anchoring a vessel in a port. What we are concerned about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to make sure that the port fulfils the duties for which it was built, and that is to help reduce the cost of living in Barbados; and if I would draw to the Minister's attention that it was he, the Minister, who said in here that were it not for the Port, he did not know what would have become of the Barbados economy.

Now what experience can the Minister carry to the Port? The whole policy of the Government where the Port is concerned is wrong, absolutely wrong, and to saddle this country with the Minister to go there, and do what? If the Minister or anyone on that side can get up and give any clear reasons why these people in Barbados, who are saddled with high inflation, and old age pensioners at \$8 per week—and now you are calling on a Minister to go down to the Port to cool off on die taxpayers again.

I consider this a wicked amendment. This is my view. An amendment to pension the Minister. That is all this Bill is about. Don't mind it has come down in this soft-soaked, half-baked, clever draft. That is

all it is; and this country cannot afford it. We can no longer afford these luxuries in which the Government has indulged over the past thirteen years; and do not be surprised if you find the Government appointing another Minister very soon to do what the present Minister should have been doing.

Now I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this whole amendment sets out to transfer to the Minister responsible for Port management those powers that are now vested in the Minister responsible for Communications. Now what are you saying? That the Minister of Communications and Works is incapable of carrying out the duties at the Port which he has been doing in the past and which other Ministers have been doing? There have been no complaints about having a Minister for the Port.

Now, the Honourable Minister without Portfolio. What else can he do? What else is he going to be called upon to do? I feel that that fancy term should be long abolished — Minister without Portfolio—that suits the Senate where you have two Ministers up there and they have an extra load of work to do, but don't tell me that in your own elected Chamber, you are now tagging somebody with 'Minister without Portfolio'. In truth and in fact — the Minister is a nice type of person. He is a nice person to say good morning to. He would sit down in the dining room and have a drink and he would crack a joke With you about all his deeds at sea, and, he will know what to do with ships, how to get along with people and the crew and so on. He is a nice type of person that way, but the responsibilities of Ministerial Status are now too heavy on the shoulders of the Minister, and the duty of the Prime Minister is to relieve him graciously; not to saddle the taxpayers with \$3, 800 a month.

He has been transferred from Ministry to Ministry, looking for an easy Ministry, because we know he is a retired old gentleman. We know this; we can appreciate this. To even pass out something nicer to him, he is a retired nice old gentleman. He is a nice person; but when it comes on to food for people, old age pensioners at \$8 a week, Holetown flooded out every time the rain sets up in St. Thomas, and all these things, consideration must be given to these first.

The report from the Nutrition Centre shows that there is an increase in malnutrition in the country, young boys and girls cannot get jobs in Bridgetown. All these things the Government must tackle. The high cost of living is accelerating day after day. You cannot look around good before you hear that the items in the food markets have reached a higher figure. Houses are needed for the poor; all of these things one should look into and tackle seriously. But the Government has come to saddle again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this country at this present stage by bringing down a clever piece of legislation to relieve the present Minister of Communications and Works and transfer his powers to a Minister without Portfolio. You hear what it is! "Without!" With nothing to do; a roving Minister; a person walking about; a social worker. That is what you can safely call the Minister. A Minister without Portfolio, No bag in his hand. No place to go, nothing to do; and so you send him down at the Port, and the country is faced again to pay that type of money out of the Treasury.

It is nothing more than a complete raid on the taxpayers of Barbados and year after year* day after day, you are having this wicked approach by the Government, and all they will tell you as you open your mouth in here to exercise what is your democratic right and to keep them in line and to draw to their attention things that they can no longer see, because they have run out of ideas, sick with power — the first thing they warn you is that it is 18 to 6 and we can talk as long as we like and however we feel like, and whenever they are finished they are going to vote against it.

Now I would like to surest to my colleagues on the other side, if they have any sort of sympathy for poor people — any heart — they can look in the Advocate of a few days ago and see Mr. Eric Sealy showing around a Minister down in New Orleans or Chapman's Lane, the poverty there in the country is still to be tackled; and this half-baked socialist group on the other side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know your regret that you are a Member of that Party for so long. But the axe must come some time.

I do not support this. I am not going to vote for it, on the strength that I do not see the need for a Minister of the Port and I am sure if we remain in here for a few more months, or another year or a year and a half, whenever the Prime Minister cares to come back to the country, if he does — I know he has to, and he had better too — that you are not going to see any more powers transferred from another Ministry to the Minister. You are not going to see anything transferred from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Tourism, or the Ministry of Home Affairs; nothing.

So what can you term him? The Minister of the Port. That is what you are going to term him; and you have a Port Manager. You have the Barbados Workers' Union down there vigilant. Yet we are called upon today to support this Bill.

I am making it very, very clear that as I see it, it does not justify my support, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not support this Bill.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have listened very carefully to all the good comments and the bad ones that have been made on the other side. The first person to whom I would like to reply is the hon. Member for St. Peter with regard to the cost of living. I still support the idea that were it not for the Bridgetown Harbour, the cost of living in Barbados would be far higher today than it is at present; and there is no getting away from that.

If we had. to put up with ferrying cargo from lighters, the cost today of lighters and the maintenance of them and the transportation from lighterage to — what should I say — a more than over-congested carenage today, the cost of living would be far higher today; because prior to 1961, with the coming into force of the Deep Water Harbour, all the lower end of the carenage that is today monopolized all the time with ships with cement, would not have been able to be there. There would be just chaos inside the carenage.

If lighters still have to operate today, the cost and maintenance and the cost of transporting cargo from ships out in Carlisle Bay into the carenage, all of this is added into the costs consumers have got to pay for their food, and there is no doubt about it, if this method was still in use, this would put the cost considerably higher. There is no doubt about that at all. 12.55 p.m.

The hon. Member for St. James made mention of the Port and the Port alone. He also mentioned something about the Minister for the Port, but that does not worry me. What we have to look at is the possibility that there will soon be an extension of the Deep Water Harbour. There is need for tugs and for somebody who knows how to operate them and so on. I feel quite happy to say that, if there is one field I have spent my life in and made it a success and will have a lot of appreciation for, it is in the Port, regardless of what the hon. Member for St. James has said. I am not worried about that. I know about

Ports and I know what contribution I can make not only to the Port, but to Barbados.

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

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

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

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

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 J inclusive were called and passed.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

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

Hon. P. G. MORGAN:

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. G. G. FERGUSON, seconded by Hon. C. E. TALMA, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Barbados Harbours (Amendment) Act, 1974.

THE CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF BARBADOS (INCORPORATION) BILL 1974.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the next Item on the Order Paper stands in my name, and it is to move the Second Reading of a Bill to provide for the incorporation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados and for connected purposes.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados made recommendations to the Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs some time ago to have the Institute incorporated for the purpose of ensuring recognition. The Attorney-General drew attention to the Institute that the easiest way to go about the matter would be by way of issuing of a licence under Section 21 of the Companies Act of 1910 (Act 1910-7), but the Institute did not accept that advice. The Institute, however, responded that other accountancy bodies which had been in existence in the Caribbean for a number of years are now incorporated.

In 1966 a loose association under the name of the Barbados Institute of Professional Accountants was

formed in Barbados. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Jamaica was formed in January, 1965, but it was superseded by the new Institute incorporated by the Public Accountancy Act, 1968. The body in Trinidad and Tobago was incorporated in 1910 by the Insitute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago Incorporation Act, 1910.

A regional conference was held, which was financed by the Commonwealth Foundation, and it was recommended that there be formed a body to be known as the Institute of Chartered Accountants in the Caribbean which would be an apex body with membership being the existing representatives in the various institutions in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago. At this meeting it was proposed that the following be implemented:

The adoption of a single form of name by each of the territorial bodies in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and it was suggested that the name to be adopted should be the Institute of Chartered Accountants of.... This means that the names of the various countries could be inserted. You would have the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and so on.

It was also agreed to adopt a standard uniform entry for membership of the territorial bodies to avoid a situation whereby a person who would not be eligible to membership of the body in his own territory could still gain entry by obtaining membership in one of the other territories where the standards were lower and thereby gain entry to the body in his own territory by the operation of reciprocity.

This request is now being granted by Government, Sir, in having it incorporated by an Act of Parliament, so that the Barbados Institute is just a part of the overall plan. 1.05 p.m.

It is felt that the corporation is the most desirable method of proceeding for the future development of the profession and all that it entails. As far as the actual Bill before us is concerned, this draft has been submitted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants and is a draft which is followed in all the Commonwealth Caribbean countries. As hon. Members would observe, that there is provision in the Rules for the registration of members and also in the Interpretation Clause it is defined what "member" means, so that accountants will in future enjoy the same protection having been registered as say Attorneys-at-Law, doctors, dentists, surveyors, architects, druggists, etc., in that there will be an Act governing their corporation and their registration, and they will receive the necessary protection and only people who are qualified and registered as such can practise and display the brass plates as accountants. It would not be possible as it is now to appear as though you are an accountant when in truth and in fact you are not registered and are not really, in some cases qualified.

It must be borne in mind that the qualified accountant offers skills to the public at large, and like all the other professions have to be protected and controlled by legislation. I think, I have covered more or less the main points. In the Bill itself Clause 4 sets out the objects of the Institute, The objects of the Institute shall be to-

(a) promote, foster, and maintain the highest standards of accounting in public practice, the public service and commercial and industrial skills.....

All the various objects are set out and it is not necessary for me to read them since all hon. Members

have copies before them.

Under Clause 5 the Institute has power to make its own rules to govern its internal working. So the Institute can make rules for —

- (a) the good government and administration of its affairs;
- (b) the collection and disposal of its funds;
- (c) prescribing the qualification for admission of members;
- (d) the admission and discipline of students.

That means they will admit their own students and they can say what qualifications are necessary for admission as a student, and then they will be disciplined.

- (e) organising the courses, method of study and examination of students.

They will be conducting their own examinations and setting out the course of study which should be followed.

- (f) the use of its facilities by persons who are neither students nor members thereof.

In short, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados when incorporated under this Act will have power to conduct its own business on a better footing and will have all the necessary protection under the Act as enjoyed by other professions. They will make their own rules and conduct their own affairs and be given better representation than they now enjoy.

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

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

I beg to second that.

Mr. FORDE:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would have liked to take the unusual course of seconding the motion from this side so that this Bill should have bi-partisan support in this House. We believe that the Bill has laudable objects, all of which are geared towards improving the standards of accountancy in Barbados particularly in public and private practice and also in the Public Service. I have had the personal honour of being associated with the Barbados Institute of Professional Accountants since it was formed initially in 1966, and indeed at that time at the invitation of Mr. Henry Cuke of the then firm of Bovell and Skeete, I offered free legal advice to the Association, and I have seen this body grow under its respective Presidents and Counsel into a Body that today I think is better recognised in the profession throughout the Caribbean as one of great stature. I believe that the Hon. Minister of Education is probably more knowledgeable than I am about the contribution which this Body has made to the teaching of Accountancy at the Barbados Community College, and no doubt he may use this opportunity himself to speak of that contribution.

I should like to say that already a lecturer in Accountancy is provided from this Body at the Community College, and indeed there are in training in Barbados something like 56 students who are pursuing courses in Accountancy. The Body has a great burden on its shoulder to try to discipline those who practise in this Profession. People who deal with personal knowledge of the public must maintain the highest standards of integrity and confidentiality, and I believe that professional organisations such as this must be geared to deal with any breach in these high ethical standards which are demanded of them, and I trust that when the Legislature of this country has passed this Act incorporating the Institute, that the Institute will not in future shirk from its duty of exercising disciplinary control over its members.

I am happy to see that already among the Students studying Accountancy there are many young ladies and that the firms in this country have welcomed women into this profession. I believe it is one ideally suited to their special care and attention and tidiness of mind which we find among females, and I must myself congratulate the existing firms and also the present President in welcoming so many female members of the profession into the fold. I am hoping Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the regional body will be soon established on a sound footing so that there can be a common code of ethics in this profession embracing all those who practise this profession in the Commonwealth Caribbean. 1.15p.m.

I think that this is necessary not only in the accounting field, but among all professional bodies. I hope that this will be an example to other disciplines and other professions such as real estate and persons who themselves seek to establish professional bodies, that they should set up codes of ethics among themselves.

We on this side of the House will give bi-partisan approval to this measure so that they will know that they have the blessings of all political parties in respect of objects as laudable as those set out in section 4 of this Bill.

Mr. E. E. GREAVES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, like the hon. Member who has just sat down, I think that the objects outlined in this Bill are laudable. The fear which I have is whether or not these objects will be maintained, and whether they will be achieved in the kind of totality one would expect professional bodies should achieve. I say that, in view of the fact that it does not seem that some of these objects are being achieved by other professional bodies.

I am Sure that Members of the House, whether members of these professions or not, will < agree with me that there is a bit of disgust that people who are members of some professional bodies are not disciplined for sharp practices or incompetence in respect of people who have to rely on them for expert advice.

I would hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this group of people would seek to maintain the highest standard possible. Accountants are very important people, especially in the economic field. We are in the situation as a developing country where a lot of attention has to be paid to economic development and finance in the future.

One of the experiences of which I have been always critical, is the way in which some people seem to

be accomplices in sharp practices by seeking to confuse someone seeking information about the financial operation of a company. The first thing the company does is to call in a firm of accountants to present a picture which may be difficult to understand or which is not a correct one.

I would hope that the objectives set out here in section 4 will ensure that the highest standards are maintained, and that every effort will be made to wipe out this kind of restrictive practice.

I am sure that it will be recognised that accountants are people in whom tremendous confidence has to be placed. This confidence can only be maintained if, when they find any of their members adopting any sharp or underhand practices, they are disciplined, and if needs be struck off the register.

I am sure, Sir, that we have not heard of any members of the other professions being debarred from practising because of unethical practices.

In the objectives set out in the Bill there is provision made for the training of accountants. This is hopefully to ensure that there is a fairly steady and large supply of accountants in Barbados. I think that those of us who have looked at the way in which professional bodies operate have seen that there is a certain amount of contrived shortages in operation. That is that professional bodies like always to ensure that there is a shortage of people in their own field in order to maintain the income levels and ensure that the field is not too overcrowded.

However, Sir, I would hope that every effort would be made to provide opportunities for as many people as possible to be trained in this field because there is a tremendous shortage of accountants, not only in Barbados, but throughout the Caribbean. This should be recognised, and I hope that the body would try to come together and give whatever assistance it can to remove the kind of restrictive practices which professional bodies are noted for practising.

I think, Sir, that in totality the Bill is one which we can compliment the Government for bringing down. I hope that it will operate not only in the best interest of the accountants of this country, but indeed in the best interest of the entire nation.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not propose to speak very long, but I could not allow this opportunity to pass without recording the appreciation of the Government first of all for the support which has come or is coming for this particular measure from the Opposition benches; and secondly for the work which the present accountant body is performing as far as the education and training in the profession of accountants is concerned.

We therefore welcome the proposals for the establishment of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados. One of the objects, at Clause 4 (f) is to encourage and assist in providing increased facilities for the study of accountancy and related subjects and co-operate with bodies that are in pursuit of those objects.

There can be no doubt that the Accounting Profession is important for the smooth and the good running of commerce and business in this country, for the performance of the routine accounting functions and the keeping of financial records, statistics and data as well as supplying the necessary

information on which decisions in business and commerce may be taken.

These are all vitally important for the growth and development of our country, and these functions cannot adequately be performed unless there is a process of on-going training to ensure that these persons who entered the profession, at whatever level, are equipped to carry out the heavy responsibilities that are entailed in these particular jobs.

As far as education and training in this particular profession are concerned, it is possible for young Barbadians to pursue courses in the practice of accounts, and indeed at a lower level in bookkeeping within the system here. At a slightly higher level, courses are available at the advanced level in accounting, and programmes are also available within the Division of Commerce of the Barbados Community College leading to the professional degree of A. L.A. and Parts 1 and 2 of the A.C.C.A. 1.25 p.m.

Scholarships have also been provided for Barbadians to study accountancy leading up to full professional qualification of Chartered Accountant under the National Development Scholarship Programme, and the University of the West Indies has under active consideration the introduction of a Master's programme in accounting, and the hope is that this particular programme will be acceptable to the several accounting bodies within the region for the status of Chartered Accountant: so the whole process of training from the lowest level right up to the top-most rung of the profession is being developed, and as far as the training in Barbados is concerned I would like to take this opportunity to record appreciation for the assistance which the professional accountants here have taken in the programme at the Community College.

As the member for Christ Church West indicated, lecturers, and tutors have been provided by that body in this programme and they are always ready to supply advice, information and whatever assistance they can in the development of this programme and I think this concern for the adequate training of accountants in this country is a sure indication that this particular body not only has paid attention to this aspect of their responsibilities but will continue to place a special importance in this particular direction.

We therefore are proposing to deepen this through the recruitment of a tutor in accountancy; with the assistance of the United Kingdom Government, that particular process of recruitment is under consideration, and we are certain that the accounting body will continue to provide the necessary assistance in the conduct of training and education for this very important profession in the country.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have listened quite attentively to what other hon. Members have had to say. Now in incorporating this body one has got to wonder today if one is not really giving licence to a body of people to further put into practice what many of them have been doing in the past, and I have said it on the floor of this House already, that there are several accountants — Chartered Accountants in practice — who, from one set of books will produce a balance sheet to submit to the Income Tax Commissioner to show that you have lost money during the year, and from the same set of figures will produce a balance sheet for the bank manager, to show that you have had a good turn over.

I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of people are going to be angry at hearing me say so, but these are

some of the sharp practices that I believe the Member for St. Lucy made reference to.

However, let us hope and pray that the education programme will continue to work well. The University of the West Indies I know is doing a considerable amount of work with respect to the training of accountants and what not, and we are hoping that we will see the furthering of this to the benefit of all who are minded to go into this particular profession.

However, Sir, there are one or two things that come to my mind. I think about 1963 — some time around that time — we had quite a number of fraternal organizations in this country which had operated under an Act of Incorporation. Many of these Acts have since been repealed.

We are faced with this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are not all of these organizations which are benevolent organizations, and as such, difficulties must arise because some of the organizations have overseas, and to my mind, world-wide association and affiliation, and a very considerable problem is posed when one society has got to make contributions to the other society and the question of securing permission to transfer a contribution or subscription, as the case may be, it creates too much difficulty; and, as it now stands when some of these organizations have to repair or to renovate their buildings and make other preparations, they have got to submit requisitions more or less to the supervisor or inspector of friendly societies, and a lot of delays are created.

Sir, I believe it is somewhat a bit too humiliating to some of the organizations to be subjected to all of this, and we would hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that immediately if not sooner, Government give a review to the matter in respect to these fraternal organizations so that they can all be permitted and be given the status of being incorporated, and be able to carry out their functions without, what we should say, let or hindrance.

We know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these fraternal bodies have their own standards and I do not think either you or I, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would find anything to say against the functioning of such organizations. We have seen them in the past; we know of their operations, but we are quite satisfied that since the founding of such organizations in England in the year 1857 there has been very little if anything that can be said against them, and the growth of them and the strengthening of them and the unity that exist amongst these bodies is something that one has got to go all out to encourage if we are to have our rightful place in any society, whether it be in Barbados or in any other part of the world.

I would urge upon the Government to give consideration to this aspect, to this phase of life of these bodies, considering the good that they do. Some of them are charitable and they extend sympathy and consideration to many causes that would otherwise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, go unnoticed, 1.35 p.m.

We are urging upon the Government the seriousness and the handicaps under which some of these fraternal organisations are now placed, so that it will be possible for them to tender their petitions to this Honourable House and be incorporated under an Act for the benefit of these organisations who serve their members.

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, beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on the Bill,

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

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 9 inclusive were 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 and passed, and cited as the Chartered Accountants of Barbados (Incorporation) Act, 1974.

Mr. A. DaC. EDWARDS entered the Chamber and took his seat.

THE POST OFFICE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1974

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Item No. 3 standing in the name of the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works be the next Order of the Day. It is to move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Post Office Act, 1911.

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 further consideration of this matter be now postponed.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS:

This is a very small point I have to make and I very much hope all those responsible for the postal services will take notice of it. I have certain business which I do with the Post Office and recently I got a circular striking Barbados from the list of preferred Commonwealth countries for postal purposes. In this circular it is stated that Barbados does not give preference to mail travelling to Great Britain and therefore mails travelling from Great Britain to Barbados will no longer be given preference. I can make this document available to the responsible authorities if they wish, but I would very much hope that since there is obviously a great traffic in mail between Barbados and Great Britain that the Post Office does nothing to make it more difficult for Barbadians to write home, send home parcels or indeed receive parcels from Barbadians resident in Britain. If it is a fact and it is not a mistake of the British Post Office that Barbados is no longer giving a preferential rate to Britain, I would ask the Postmaster General and all those concerned to seriously consider that by not giving Britain a preferential rate we are the sufferers because it is Barbadians in Britain who will be suffering in the long run.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Question is.....

Mr. BOLDEN:

I am speaking on the motion that further consideration be postponed. Can further consideration be postponed of a Bill which has not been circulated and gazetted? I am speaking about the Bill which was introduced because the one which was circulated has been introduced. How can you postpone something which has not been circulated and gazetted? It is unofficially before the House, so how can you postpone it. The Minister ought to say he is withdrawing the statement he made.

Hon. C. E. TALMA.:

The hon. Member would recall that in my capacity as Leader of the House I stated that Item No. 3 which stands in the name of the Minister of Communications and Works to deal with this particular matter was the next Order, therefore I have the perfect right to ask at this stage that further consideration of this matter be now postponed.

Mr. BOLDEN:

With all due respect to you, Sir, the Hon. Leader of the House is wrong. We have been circulated with what is supposed to be set out under Government Business today. The Minister has introduced something which he alone knows about. It has not been circulated neither has it been gazetted.

Mr. EDWARDS:

On a point of order.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Will both hon. Members take their seats?

Mr. BOLDEN:

The new leader wants to show up his power now.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

There is no leader in here as far as I am concerned. The Leader of the House has the right to ask that

further consideration of Item 3 be postponed.

The Question that further consideration be postponed, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division,

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. C. E. TALMA. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended for one hour.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON:

I beg-.to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 1.55 p.m.

On the Resumption:

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Temporary Minister of Communications and Works may proceed. He caught my eye.

Hon. C. E. TALMA.:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before the Minister proceeds I would like to mention that the Bill, Item No. 3, which we are dealing with, has been duly circulated. The Bill has already been introduced, and the Minister is absolutely correct. The Bill has been introduced and the Second Reading is quite in order. Members have been given copies of this Bill. The Opposition, I understand, have their copies and certain Government Members have copies. We all have copies. We made certain that everybody had copies, and we are in a position now to continue with further consideration of this Bill, Item No. 3. I want to make that clear.

Mr. CRAIG:

Mr. Deputy Speaker.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Just one minute please. I have been made to understand by the Leader of the House that copies have been circulated, but amidst my papers I do not see any copy here.

Mr. CRAIG:

Sir, that is exactly what I am coming to. The Leader of the House is conveying that the Temporary Minister of

Communications and Works is right, and that copies of this Bill have been circulated. Now I have before me a copy which has just been placed in front of me, only a matter of seconds before the House came back in.

What the Leader of the House is actually trying to say is that we had copies, and the Minister was

rightly introducing it. Therefore we have to ask the question who is wrong?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

On a point of order, Sir. I heard the Leader of the Opposition say that he had two copies.

Mr. CRAIG:

Two copies for six members. There are six members on this side. The Leader of the House has admitted himself that some of his colleagues on the other side do not have copies; and up to this moment, Sir, you have no copy. It has not been placed before us, and I do not think that the Minister, even at his present age, could even think of attempting to do this today.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Point made.

Mr. CRAIG:

I am not on a point of order, Sir. I was speaking immediately after the Minister rose.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

On a point of order. I was under the impression that the Opposition had copies. That is what the Leader of the Opposition said. I am not trying to mislead anybody. The Leader of the Opposition made it clear that he had two copies.

Mr. CRAIG:

So on other matters he would try to mislead us, but not on this particular one! That is the sort of behaviour that you get in here all the time. Now he gets up saying that the Minister was right, the Clerk was wrong, the Opposition is wrong and you are wrong, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I would like to know if the Hon. Minister (acting) is seeking permission now to deal with this Bill.

Hon. R. St. C. WEEKES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, ...

Mr. HINDS:

On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Both hon. Members will please take their seats. A Bill has just been handed to me. I can only speak on what has been done. I noticed the Temporary Hon. Minister of Communications and Works on his feet. I want to know if he is seeking permission to deal with.....

Hon. R. St. C. WEEKES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am entitled to speak. I have not completed.

Mr. HINDS:

On a point of order, Sir. I am saying that in my humble submission what you are trying to do, is

highly improper. Why I am saying that it is highly improper is that if the Minister has something down his throat or down his stomach or whatever it is, it is for him to vomit it up, not for you to try to extract it out of him. Remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are in a minority in here and you are there to protect our rights, not to take them away from us and try to stuff it into the Minister whose head, if you stuff it from in front or elsewhere, it will never reach where you want to get it to reach this afternoon.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I am in the Chair. As regards the remarks made by the hon. Member for St. Peter towards the Temporary Minister of Communications, I will ask the Member please to withdraw them. I consider them offensive.

Mr. HINDS:

What remarks do you mean, Sir?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The remarks that you made. I, as Deputy Speaker here, do consider that they are unparliamentary.

Mr. HINDS:

I am quite willing to withdraw any remarks, but I would like to hear the exact words that are offensive, the exact words that are being complained about; and I am quite willing to withdraw them if I am called upon to do so; but I am asking what are the exact words complained about.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Then, is the hon. Member not respecting the Chair? The Chair is of the opinion that the words used are unparliamentary.

Mr. HINDS:

What words are they? I am only, -asking what were the words, so that I can satisfy myself that when I withdraw the words I do so with a clear conscience. I am quite willing to withdraw any words that the Chair rules are unparliamentary or out of order or whatever it is. All I am saying is that I will do so when I hear the exact words, the specific words, that are complained against.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I am having the words taken from the Reporter.

Mr. HINDS:

Make things easy, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

A bit of paper has been handed to me, but it does appear as if the Reporter has not got all the words; but I will read what has been sent to me.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am on trial in this situation, and you are telling me that you have some of the words? I am willing to go on trial for the whole statement.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Please take your seat. I have noticed, especially today that the hon. Member for St. Peter is trying to prove that I am partial. I am saying that when I sit here I act impartially. The hon. Member has referred to me in the Opposition as well as in the Government. I want to make it clear that I will never be unfair to any Member while I am acting as Speaker of this House. Your remarks savoured that I am inclined to be that way. I noticed it just now, and I have reason to think so now again. It appears to me that the Reporter did not get down all the words which I asked the hon. Member for St. Peter to withdraw, and if he so desires now he can withdraw them; but what I have before me does not warrant the hon. Member withdrawing any words. 3.10 p.m.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before we get any further on this point, Sir, as you have said, there is no case to answer, and we would say this legally, but there is one point in the procedure that we have to get perfectly straight. Any time a Speaker or Deputy Speaker asks for a transcript of what a Member has said, that transcript must be the transcript of the person who wrote the Shorthand notes. And even at this point, with all due respect to you Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would say that you Mr. Deputy Speaker, cannot even look at what you have in your hand, because I watched from here and the Shorthand Reporter did not make a transcript of any notes; therefore there is nobody to tell you whether or not what you have in your hand is what the Shorthand Reporter took down, because if we had to challenge him — I have not seen him write anything yet in English — so far as it stands now, there is no case. The case has not even got off the ground.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is just one point. I understand you to say that I seem to have got the impression that you were being partial, or tried to be. That is not the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All I said was, that you were trying to teach the Minister. That is all.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Very well. Now I am making this point clear. A piece of paper with a Bill written on it was handed to me — a document — and no permission has been asked for it to be dealt with today. I do not want any one on either side to think that I am favouring the Government, or otherwise.

The point is, when I took up my Portfolio here, no such Bill was in it and no permission was asked that it be circulated, but here, I have seen this and if it is to be dealt with today permission would have to be granted. And I think this closes the issue for now.

Hon. R. St. C. WEEKES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before you close the issue Sir, I feel it is my duty having been belittled by the Opposition to clear the air on the matter. Now, Sir, this Bill was read a first time in this House (Asides).....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Order! Let us have some order. I was not of the opinion that the Honourable Minister of Communications was belittled and I have made the point clear as regards this Bill.

Hon. R. St.C. WEEKES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I am entitled to clear the air on this matter. The impression which the Opposition gave-.....

Mr. CRAIG:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to follow what is before the House. You have just made it very clear that the matter was closed. That is your ruling; that the matter is closed, and your ruling is quite in order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now I hear about clearing the air, What is before the House? I would like to know, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I will allow the hon. Member to develop his point.

Let me hear you. May I hear the Hon. Temporary Minister,

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

The Opposition gave this House the impression that I was incapable of dealing with the matter. The position is this, Sir.....

Mr. ADAMS:

On a point of order, Sir. Only one speech was made by the Opposition, which was mine, and the Minister in saying that I sought to show that a Member was incapable is suggesting that I broke the rules by ascribing improper motives to a Member, and I did no such thing. I did not belittle him nor did I say he was incapable, and if he says that I made an unparliamentary speech, it was not objected to at the time, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The point is made.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we have dealt with this matter sufficiently long. Your ruling is very clear, but I just want to say this. It is clear that all Members were not given copies. These were not duly circulated.

So like that, the copies must be duly circulated and ample time must be given. I did not try to mislead anybody. I was under that impression. I thought that the Opposition had copies of two Bills and that some of us had copies of two, but I certainly only had the copy of one.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

That matter is closed.

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

Mr. Chairman.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

What is the hon. Member speaking on?

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

Mr. Chairman.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I am not the Chairman.

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

Sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am saying, Sir, that the impression the House got from the Leader of the Opposition and (Asides) Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not come in here through the window. I came in here through the door and I am entitled to speak as any other hon. Member.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

But when you are speaking and you are addressing the Chair, you do not have to shout.

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

I did not shout at you; you got that impression. If I have shouted at you, I apologise.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Will you please take your seat. I would like to hear you make your point succinctly. Go ahead.

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

On the 6th August, I introduced this Bill in the House of Assembly and it was read a first time.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

There is no Bill before the House. I have made the point quite clear that it was not circulated, so you cannot.....

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to clear the air with this matter,

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The matter has already been cleared and the Leader of the House has agreed. Why is it that the Honourable Temporary Minister is going against the Minister? Is this the correct type of behaviour? The point is cleared. It cannot be raised as long as I am in the Chair today.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this concludes Government Business for today's Sitting.....

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, before the Leader of the House makes that statement, I want to make one statement. I do not deem this to be proper circulation of a Bill when it is signed by somebody and dated before it had been considered and I would like the House to have on record that if this has been pushed before me and it is deemed to be circulated, that I do not consider this to be circulation.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you. May I hear the Leader of the House.

Hon. R. StC. WEEKES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am asking for leave to deal with this Bill.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Is the honourable Member aware that this Bill will not be discussed at all today? 3.20 p.m.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this is a very simple matter. There are times when the Government brings down measures that the Government wants done the same day; it introduces the measures and seeks leave of the House to deal with them on that day. This is a matter which has been given notice of since the 6th August, and on that day it was given its First Reading.

Mr. HINDS:

On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to know, firstly, what is before the House and, secondly, you have already ruled that this matter will not be dealt with today. I do not understand what the Hon. Minister has got up to talk about.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

If you will sit, you will understand.

Mr. HINDS:

On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Let us have a little better behaviour, please. He has given way to you. Will you, please, give way when your turn comes. He has taken his seat. Have you completed your speech?

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is what you should first try to find out before you ask me to behave a little better.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

You were doing nothing more. I saw you.....

Mr. HINDS:

The reference about behaving a little better is a reflection on me, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

That is your opinion. If you felt that you were behaving badly it would fall on you.

Mr. HINDS:

I have never behaved badly in this Honourable House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I hope you will never.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is clear that this matter is not properly before the House. Even though it has been given notice of, it has apparently, not been printed and circulated. All that I am saying is that if this matter is properly before the House today, leave would have to be sought and given. There is ample precedent for this. Very often Government wants matters dealt with the same day. It gives notice of those matters and then seek the leave of the Chamber to deal with them the same day. This is slightly different from that in that notice has already been given. This does not conform with the Rules of this Chamber, because the Bill has been printed but, apparently, not circulated. It has now been brought to the attention of hon. Members. You are quite right, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Leave will have to be sought. I think that if leave is asked for, you would use your discretion in whatever way you think fit.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

That is why I gave my ruling. No leave was sought to deal with this Bill.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Leader of the Opposition to whom as far as I can recall, universal courtesy, a letter is sent whenever the Government seeks to ask leave to depart from the Rules of the House in respect of Second and Third Readings of a Bill, just let me make my comment. It is one thing to tell the Leader of the Opposition, a couple of days in advance, that leave will be sought to deal with a measure in all its stages in a day and hon. Members, perhaps, have the material one day in advance — sometimes even the same day in the House — but it is material upon which hon. Members are already well informed. This is a different situation, because something was circulated and it was not what was sought to be passed. That is the actual point. Not only do we not know it is coming, but we have been misled into thinking that we were going to discuss postage rates today when we could make certain points about postage rates. Hon. Members will see that I came prepared today to deal with postage rates and not with transshipment rates. That is why I would respectfully suggest that nobody asks for leave, and let us deal with the matter in the fullness of time.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Whether or not leave is asked for, the fact is that the matter has not been properly circulated, and I am not going to proceed with it. I accept your ruling, Sir. Government Business is now concluded for today's Sitting.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what about Question Time?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Will someone move that Question Time be now taken?

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that Question Time be now taken.

Mr. CRAIG:

I beg to second, that.

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

QUESTION TIME Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Question No. 185.

POLICY RE ISSUE OF DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS

Mr. FORDE:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to enquire of the appropriate Minister Will the Minister state Government's practice and/or policy in relation to the issue of diplomatic passports? 2. Will the Minister state how many such passports have been issued since independence and the categories of persons to whom the same have been issued?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the replies are as follows

The Government's policy is to authorise the issuance of diplomatic passports to persons representing Barbados diplomatic or consular posts abroad and to other persons whose frequent engagement in the conduct of Government's international affairs requires the courtesies and facilities extended to holders of such passports.

At 10th May, 1974 the number of diplomatic passports issued (including replacements of those written out) was 221. The categories of persons to whom diplomatic passports have been granted are as follows:

- (a) The Governor-General and his wife
- (b) The Ministers of Government and their spouses
- (c) Ambassadors and High Commissioners
- (d) The Chief Justice
- (e) The President of the Senate
- (f) The Speaker of the House of Assembly
- (g) Parliamentary Secretaries and their spouses
- (h) Permanent Secretaries
- (i) Officers of the Ministry of External Affairs who are
- (i) of or above the rank of administrative Assistant

(ii) holders of diplomatic and consular posts abroad

(j) Persons who reside with and are members of the immediate family of persons holding diplomatic and consular posts abroad

(k) The Director of Public Prosecutions (1) The Auditor General

(m) The General Manager of the Industrial Development Corporation

(n) The Representative, Tourist Board — U.S.A. and Canada

(o) Travel Development Officer, Tourist Board — U.S.A. and Canada.

Mr. FORDE:

May the Minister state whether it would be contrary to Government's policy to issue a diplomatic passport to the Leader of the Opposition who, undoubtedly, has greater priorities and status in this respect than some of the categories of persons mentioned like the General Manager of the Industrial Development Corporation? 3.30 p.m.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the most I can say at this stage is that I will make a special note of it and bring it to the attention of Cabinet.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Will the Minister state whether or not it is Government's policy that Permanent Secretaries and their wives should have more status than Members of Parliament of Barbados?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

As a correction to what the hon. Member said, I never said Permanent Secretaries and their wives. I merely said Permanent Secretaries, and then I said Parliamentary Secretaries and their spouses.

Mr. CRAIG:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Minister aware that you and the Chairman of Committees of this House are not entitled to a diplomatic passport?

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government is aware that in fact the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees do not hold diplomatic passports, but there are certain criteria laid down for the issuing of diplomatic passports. They are issued to officers who normally travel on Government business or the business of the country. In other words, even if the holder of a diplomatic passport is travelling on his own business, he should not use the diplomatic passport, but an ordinary passport. It is only when that officer and his wife are travelling on the business of the country that he should use the diplomatic passport, otherwise he should use the ordinary passport. For that reason the the Leader of the Opposition, not normally required to travel on Government business or business of the country has not been issued with a diplomatic passport.

Mr. FORDE:

Is the Minister aware that delegations from this Parliament have travelled abroad representing this country on business of this country as a whole, and were it not for the courtesy extended to them by the High Commissioners and Ambassadors of this country, they could well have been exposed to certain indignities? Will the Minister try to look at Government's policy in that light to make sure that representatives of this country for the particular journey at least have diplomatic passports? It is in keeping with practice in other countries.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Will the Minister state how many passports can an individual hold at one and the same time?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

The hon. Member should be aware that you can have a diplomatic passport and an ordinary passport.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Will the Minister state whether or not when Members of Parliament of Barbados travel abroad they are not representing the country at any given time, particularly at international conferences, C.P.A. business or having been invited by other Governments particularly by virtue of their position as Members of Parliament?

Mr. CRAIG:

Sir, if the Minister is not aware, is he aware that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, attended a Conference in the Bahamas quite recently? Is he trying to mislead the House with this nonsense all the time? Are you saying you are not aware of that?

Mr. FORDE:

Will the Minister give this House the assurance that he will draw to the attention of Cabinet the necessity to ensure that persons representing this country at international conferences are issued with a diplomatic passport for purposes of the particular journey?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in respect of the points raised by hon. Members on the other side, I can assure them that they will be taken up and duly considered, because a delegation comprised of Members of Parliament should be given the best treatment possible when abroad, and if by having diplomatic passports we know certain facilities are extended, I think it is a very good point which was made and it will be given due consideration.

Mr. HINDS:

Do the sisters of Ministers get diplomatic passports?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not quite sure whether that is a personal question, but the hon. Member would recall that I said in reply to paragraph (j) persons who reside with and who are members of the immediate family of persons holding diplomatic and consular posts abroad.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Is the Minister aware that Members of Parliament of other Commonwealth countries always travel abroad on diplomatic passports?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

There seems to be no further Replies.

QUESTION RE TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT AT CUSTOMS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Question No. 216 stands in the name of the hon. Member for St. Peter.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question reads as follows-

To enquire of the appropriate Minister: Is the Minister aware that the employment of five (5) persons serving at Her Majesty's Customs was terminated, almost abruptly, as at 31st December, 1973? 2. Is the Minister aware that of the five persons referred to at No. 1 above one had served Her Majesty's Customs continuously, with satisfaction, for almost three years; and the others for periods of over two years each? 3. Is it a fact -that Her Majesty's Customs was overstaffed, the retrenchment? 4. For how long has this alleged overstaffing situation existed? 5. Prior to the retrenching of the five persons abovementioned, had the work-load of Her Majesty's Customs subsided in any particular respect? If so, in what respect, and in what branch or branches?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Replies are as follows-

"The services of five persons, two guards and three porters were terminated during the period 30th September 1973 to 31st December 1973 for the following reasons :-

(a) Two vacant posts of Guards were filled with effect from 30th September, 1973 and 31st October, 1973 respectively.

(b) There was a substantial reduction in the work load of the Spirit Bond following the amalgamation by Messrs Hanschell Larsen and Company Limited, and J. N. Goddard and Sons Limited and C. F. Harrison and Company Limited of their liquor business interest into one combine under the trade name of Hanschell Larsen and Company (1973) Limited, and as a result one porter was laid off.

(c) The services of two other porters were terminated because of unsatisfactory work and behaviour and in one instance for unhygienic practices as well.

3.40 p.m.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, can the Minister tell us if these workers who were laid off for unsatisfactory work and unsatisfactory behaviour, and in one case, unhygienic practices — if before being laid off, the

workers were warned at any time?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the hon. Member could be more specific, I may be able to help. I do not know exactly when this worker was engaged. There are three workers involved, so I am not in a position really to give the answer to this particular question.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I put the question. The Minister is supposed to have investigated. He has given replies and I am asking about the workers who were laid off because their work was unsatisfactory and because their behaviour was unsatisfactory, and about one worker who was dismissed for engaging in unhygienic practices. I am asking whether any of these workers, these offending workers, were given a warning that they were going wrong so that they could pull their socks up and keep their jobs. Surely files are kept on these people where they work.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the case of one particular officer — I do not care to call names — in the case of one particular worker, he was warned. There is a report to this effect His work performance has always been unsatisfactory. He seems to be lacking in his mental capacity; and when given a voucher for goods required from the warehouse, he has, invariably, to seek the help of one of his other porters. He is a frequent user of foul language in and around the warehouse; and the officer in charge of the bond also told me (the officer reporting) that he has had to speak to this gentleman about urinating at places in the bond other than the latrine provided for that purpose.

In reply to a question posed by the particular person, the gentleman in question told this person, who is the officer reporting, that he used to see other porters urinating in places other than the latrine.

This is just an idea, Sir. Just a sample.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, can the Minister state how long has this particular worker been employed and when did these practices or his inefficiency become known?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

I will not worry to call the names of the people involved. In the case of the Customs Guard, the first one.....

Mr. BOLDEN:

I am only asking in respect of the last statement which was read. Can he tell us when this person was employed and when did his inability or his mental state and unsatisfactory practices become known?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

In the case of this particular officer, he was employed as a porter on the 26th November, 1971. The date of his temporary appointment was the 26th November. He was laid off on the 23rd November, 1973.

Mr. BOLDEN:

The Minister has not told us when these unsatisfactory practices and mental instability became known.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

It appears that there are no further replies.

Mr. HINDS:

I Have-not asked any questions yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I have you booked for one.

Mr. HINDS:

I am entitled to ask questions.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Only two more. I would like the hon. Member to know that I am not allowing people to run all over the place asking as many questions as they like. Three questions per Member.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not like Dr. Williams. One from three still leaves two. Is the Minister aware that a worker who has served three years with satisfaction, without any complaint and without any warning whatsoever, was also dismissed, or had his services terminated?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that at this stage I had better read from the file on what the investigation has shown. There are five people involved — two Customs Guards and three Porters. The first was employed on 31/7/72 and laid off on 30/9/73. The second was employed on 19/12/71 and laid off on 31/10/73. Then the Porters. The first one was employed on 5/12/71 and laid off on the 23/11/73. The second was employed on the 26/11/71 and laid off on the 23/1/73. The third Porter was employed on the 13/10/71 and laid off on the 31/12/73. These are the facts and the circumstances as far as these workers are concerned.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

There seem to be no further replies. Question No. 217 standing in the name of the hon. Member for St. Peter.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker., to enquire of the appropriate Minister Were the Guard Room keys at Her Majesty's Customs reported stolen or misplaced at any time during the month of December, 1973? (2) Have the keys been recovered? And if so, from whom? (3) Is it a fact that the Security Guards at Her Majesty's Customs were denied entry to their department during the period of the "missing keys"? 3.50 p.m

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reply to Question No. 217 is as follows

"The Comptroller of Customs is not aware that the keys of the Guard room were reported stolen or misplaced during the month of December, 1973."

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I never questioned what the Comptroller of Customs knew or what he did not know. I asked if the Minister is aware of this. Does the Minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, base his Reply on the fact that it may be too embarrassing to admit this? Does his investigations reveal that this did happen? That the keys were really reported stolen, but it would be something too embarrassing for the Minister to admit now? Mr. Deputy Speaker, can the Minister tell us if it is true that the Customs guards were denied entry to their departments? Can he tell us if this is true?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

I have read what the Reply is. I have nothing to add. The Comptroller of Customs is not aware that the keys of the guardroom were reported stolen or misplaced during the month of December 1973.

Mr. HINDS:

I am asking the Leader of the House, can he tell us if it is true that the Customs guards were denied entry to their department. That is all we are asking. (A Pause) Can the Minister tell us then, Sir, why the Customs guards could not get into their department.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

May I remind the hon. Member that he is contravening the Standing Orders? I have him booked for three substantive questions.

Mr. HINDS:

Three supplementaries to this? Do you mean that I have asked four, Sir? I have been counting as well, Sir, and the last question I put to the Leader of the House, he will reply to it. He is ready to reply now Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The hon. Member asked three questions. My arithmetic is fairly good.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will the hon. Minister state whether or not during the month of December Customs guards were denied entry to their department at any time due to the unavailability of the necessary keys?

(A Pause)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Again it seems as if no Reply is forthcoming. I shall put the next question.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not trying to be awkward. The matter was referred to the Comptroller of

Customs for his comments and he has stated that he is not aware that the guardroom keys were stolen or misplaced at any time during December, 1973, therefore he was not in a position to answer the questions posed at paragraphs 2 to 5. He believes however that some incident which happened on Christmas Eve may have given rise to these questions.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Will the hon. Minister state what happened on Christmas Eve involving the Customs guards?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a note here, Sir, that at about 5.30 p.m., on Christmas Eve the Comptroller reported that he visited the guardroom to give the guard on duty instructions relative to two packages which had been seized and were being kept. There was no guard in the room nor in sight anywhere along the upper or lower wharf. After waiting for about half an hour he decided to lock the door in order to safeguard the packages which were stored in the building and then he left the premises.

On his return to the guardroom at approximately 7.30 he found a guard standing in front of the building. 4.00 p.m.

He gave the necessary instructions concerning the packages to this Guard and then left for home. About half an hour after he arrived home, the Guard, who had left the room unattended, telephoned the Comptroller and apologised for his negligence. He was reprimanded, and the incident was closed.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Will the Minister state what became of those packets which were in the Guard Room and had no right being there?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

There is no reply forthcoming. As I look at the clock on the wall, Question Time, for thirty minutes, has passed.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with all due respect to you, one can only deal with the allotted time when the Standing Orders are used in accordance with what is written in them. Question Time was taken with no reference to any allotted time.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The point made by the hon. Member is correct, but in the Standing Orders the time allotted is 30 minutes I will permit the other two questions to be answered now. The next question is No. 232.

Mr. HINDS:

Are you talking about the Comptroller?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

That is not the question. The question is No. 232.

UNCONTROLLED MOVEMENT OF SHEEP IN BRIDGETOWN

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to enquire of the appropriate Minister Is the Minister aware that for some years now numerous uncontrolled sheep have been walking through the streets of Bridgetown causing obstruction to traffic and pedestrians; that with the increase of motor traffic in the city the uncontrolled movement of these animals is likely to cause serious accidents and traffic jams. Would the Minister state what steps he intends to take to remove this potential danger from our streets?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the replies are as follows

1. Yes, Sir.

2. Yes, Sir.

3. The existing provisions of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Regulations will be updated and penalties increased in new comprehensive legislation which will be introduced into Parliament shortly.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder whether this legislation will be introduced in the same manner as the question dealing with stray dogs in this country? They had also promised to introduce legislation dealing with that matter, but it has not yet reached Parliament.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

No proper Supplementary.

Mr. ADAMS:

Will the Minister cause a veterinary examination to, be made of such sheep as can be captured so that we can understand how Barbadian sheep are so intelligent as to cross the road without getting injured, while they cause motorcars to run into each other?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

No replies. The next Question is No. 214.

QUESTION RE ADVISORY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport How many times during the calendar year ending 31st December, 1973 did the Advisory Board of Education and each of its five Constituent Committees meet? 2. What were the dates of each meeting of each body? 3. What is the policy of the Ministry with respect to getting advice or information on any changes foreshadowed in our educational system? 4. Would the Minister give a brief summary of some of the matters which engaged the attention of the Advisory Board and each of its five Constituent Committees, in committee, at any time during the period under review?

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 214 is as follows

"There were no meetings of the Board of Education or of its five Constituent Committees during 1973.

2. As far as the seeking of advice or information on educational changes are concerned, it is the policy of the Ministry to rely on any or all of the following mechanisms:—

(i) to consult with existing bodies; (ii) to establish special committees; (iii) to utilise its own staff resources."

Mr. HINDS:

Can the Minister tell us what are the existing bodies to which he refers for his information?

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the existing bodies are bodies which have been established to give advice on matters. These would relate to Governing Bodies, Boards of Management, and so on. Unions may be consulted and a whole range of bodies.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, can the Minister tell us if the Board of Education, or any of its five Constituent Committees, would be proper bodies to refer to for the type of information he would need?

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Board of Education is a proper body.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, he told us that throughout the year 1973 no information whatsoever was sought from this Board!

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

Mr. Deputy ' Speaker, I said in my reply that there were no meetings of the Board of Education during 1973. I would like to indicate that the Board of Education does not necessarily meet at the invitation of the Minister, or in terms of a request for advice, the Board has the initiative to draw to the attention of the Minister, or the Chief Education Officer, as the case may be, any matter which it feels that attention should be drawn. It does not have to wait until matters are referred to it. It has an initiating role.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Again the hon. Member is trying to break the Standing Orders.

Mr. HINDS:

How many questions have I asked, Sir?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Three.

Mr. HINDS:

I must abide by your ruling, Sir. If the Board of Education is ----

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Three questions have been asked, and this has brought us to the end of Question Time.

Mr. CRAIG:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take it that this is Private Members' Time. You have a Resolution here, and I wonder if you are going to carry on with it today.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Now can the hon. Member ask me while sitting in the Chair to carry on with a Resolution in my name? 4.10 p.m

Mr. CRAIG:

Sir, you have visited London and all you have to do is to step by the side of the Chair and you can do what you have to do.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Resolution on the Order Paper that stands in my name will be dealt with at the proper time.

THE ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that concludes Government Business for today's sitting. Before moving the adjournment, I should like, if necessary, to make a morion. Normally it is done by way of leave, but fearing leave will not be granted, I will make a motion that Tuesday, 27th August, be set aside for dealing with the amendments to the Constitution and that the Sitting commence at 10.30 a.m. and not 12 noon as is the practice. I want to make that as a motion because I know in asking for leave what transpires in this House today. That is my motion.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON:

I beg to second that,

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, I can speak on the motion, but I would like to speak on a point of order first. In my respectful submission that is not a proper motion. The time of starting of the House can only be moved on an adjournment, and there was not a proper motion to say that at 10.30 a.m next week such and such be done.

The second point is that if the Government, with or without suspension of the Standing Orders, comes

to do the amendments to the Constitution and declares that is to be Item 1 under Government Business, there is nothing that even another Government Minister as obstreperous as the Hon. Temporary Minister, the Member for St. Philip South was today could alter; so with great respect I would submit that the motion is not only out of order, but unnecessary, because if the Constitution is called and we debate it, the Government can debate it until midnight, it can be over early and the Government can finish the House's business for that day, it can pass with the approbation of all Members of the House — I dare say all these things are possible — but in any event I submit that while we are glad to hear from the hon. Member that the rumours are true that next Tuesday is the saddest day in the political history of independent Barbados, yet it does not have to be this means of achieving it which the Minister is now seeking to do. I would surerest that the motion is out of order. He must move an adjournment motion.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to join with the Leader of the Opposition in this because I do not see how the Hon. Leader of the House can pass or seek to have a motion passed today to affect the House next week when the Standing Orders are still in force. The whole point is that the Government has drawn up Standing Orders, but it has been eroding them day after day and paying no notice to them unless it wants something specifically in them to deal with somebody else, and this is a typical example by starting today to move a motion to tell the House what it does next week, even if when you come in next week they cannot get a quorum. It is completely out of order for the Leader of the House to try to pass a motion today to tell you that he is binding the House, and I do not think it can be done legally. He cannot bind the House on any specific day on what is to be done. It is when he comes here on that day and they have a majority that he can move a motion on what they can do on that particular day. He can set aside the Standing Orders and go through, but he cannot in my humble opinion pass any motion or Resolution today which binds next week's Sitting of the House, and I think it shows clearly to the general public what will come out of next week's debate. It shows quite clearly that they intend to ride rough-shod through everybody and everything irrespective of the legality of the procedure.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is merely that normally I would ask for leave, but my experience in here is that you ask for leave and you do not get it, and it is for that reason that I had to adopt that policy. I was about to move the adjournment of the House and I was intimating to hon. Members what Government's intention is. Of course it is subject to the hon. Member who is going to speak on the adjournment.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Will the hon. Member withdraw the motion?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Yes, I will withdraw.

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 27th August, 1974 at 10.30 a.m

Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON:

I beg to second that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Question is that this House do now adjourn j until Tuesday 27th August, 1974, at 10.30 a.m.

Mr. ADAMS:

Sir, as Your Honour knows.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I think the hon. Member is a bit late.

Mr. ADAMS:

I do not believe you would do me that, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I had reached the end of the question.

Mr. ADAMS:

You have notice from me about a motion, Sir, and the division has not been put.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think in a case like this.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

But in fairness to the Speaker, the hon. Member must realise that he is not dealing with a yard fowl. I had come to the end of my statement and I was correct. I was aware from a letter received from the hon. Member and I could be of the opinion that he had changed his mind; so I had to carry out my duties. If however he is still willing to speak, I can accept him. But please do not feel that I am not capable of carrying out my duties here because I had reached the end. The hon. Member may proceed.

Mr. ADAMS:

Thank you, Sir. I perhaps misunderstood the words of the Rule that the raising of the subject matter is to be made through such arrangements as the Speaker may make; so I was waiting for you to make the arrangements, waiting for you to call on me.

Anyhow, Sir, I am much obliged to you and the Leader of the House for your indulgence in this matter granted the interpretation of the Rules which you have applied, and I am all the more grateful for the indulgence because I do not believe the matter which I raise is one of the deepest party controversy. The matter which I raise relates to rumours which have been going about for some time now that the Mobil Oil Company which at present has a monopoly of refining operations in Barbados of petroleum products and which is the only supplier of fuel to the Barbados Light and Power Company, has been seeking an increase in price for its petroleum products both by negotiations with the Barbados Light & Power Co. and by direct application to the Ministry of Trade who are the bodies responsible for the control of prices generally. This I would suggest is a most ill-timed move by the Mobil Oil Company, As is known, there is widespread public disquiet at the increase in the cost of electricity of this country; there is widespread public disquiet at the increase in the cost of living generally. I cannot believe that at a time when the Mobil Oil Company has made greater profits than even the old Standard Oil Company ever did under Vice-President Rockefeller's father when he had all eleven standards under his wing, that Mobil can honestly look at the people of Barbados, with last quarter profits of 1973 of SUS279 greater than any annual profit it has ever made, with first quarter profits of this year greater still, and ask us to pay

more for petroleum products.

Now international Oil Companies throughout the world have made the most enormous profits through the Middle East crisis. I am one that tends to believe that there is a conspiracy between many of the oil companies and the Arab Governments, a deliberate conspiracy entered into not only to further the political ends of the Arab cause, but to further the profits of the international oil companies. I am one that believes that. I believe that Mobil Barbados is not making profits on the scale of its parent company in Venezuela and of the standard Oil Company of New York in its extracting operations throughout the world, that Mobil Barbados, true it is a gas station on the vast Mobil world-wide chain, is only returning a normal, reasonable and decent profit, but these are days of excess profits, therefore the big bosses in Venezuela and New York want more money. 4.20 p.m

Now, I have to blame the Government and the Minister of Trade to some extent, because over the last few years the Minister of Trade has given way to blackmail on the part of many suppliers of commodities in Barbados. He has given way to blackmail that if you do not give a rise in price, then the supply will dry up.

This is all very well for lard oil and for biscuits which have alternatives but it not so for petroleum. Therefore when the Mobil Company has been threatening its customers that it will cancel the tanker which was due to arrive in Barbados on Saturday and that there will be no more oil for us users next week — these treats to my knowledge have been made — the Mobil Oil Company is in my submission to hon. Members putting itself directly within the meaning of those Acts of Parliament in Barbados which speak, of threat to the life and essential services of this island.

This is not lard oil. This is petroleum. If Mobil Oil Company makes any threats the Cabinet should be prepared to take steps, to send the police if needs be, to occupy that refinery, because that and that alone has the storage space, which is another very important point — the storage space to store all the oil that Barbados needs. If at any stage it becomes an emergency, that would be a real oil crisis, not the one invented by Mobil and the Minister of Trade in November.

We should be prepared, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to take the most drastic steps in dealing with this. I am informed that the Cabinet has already given way at a preliminary stage to this matter of a rise in oil price. I have never trusted the informant who gave that information and I am glad to hear some Cabinet Members laughing at him. I can only say that I have received certain information.

I do not believe that I would have to tell people who have the interest of Barbados at heart that now is the time to seek alternative supplies of oil and ensure that there is sufficient storage capacity in Barbados to store them. Particularly, the Barbados Light and Power Company must not be deprived of its fuel supplies. They must not have any sudden announcement saying that lights have to be out except for an hour between 7 and 8 o'clock or whatever the case may be.

The policy which the Barbados Labour Party has recently annunciated and which will be annunciated in the next election is that there should be a National Petroleum Corporation to take over the functions of the Natural Gas Corporation, taking over the importation of liquified petroleum gas for as long as this is necessary in the absence of the full development of our oil supplies, and taking over the refining and wholesaling of all petroleum products.

In conclusion Sir, — because I do not believe I am allowed a very long period to speak — I would say that this move by Mobil to my mind comes at a highly suspicious time when after many years dating back to the old Government and the Premiership of Sir Grantley Adams, now that it seems that there is some oil to supply the domestic needs of Barbados, I think it most significant that when Mobil has been called on to refine our local oil, immediately they begin to make difficulties and say that they have to mix it with oil from Venezuela which is more expensive and that this is going to put up the price and so on and so on.

It is of great significance, in my submission. If it happens that at this moment Mobil wants to get out of Barbados we should be prepared to give them a helping hand. As far as I am concerned, I have said on platforms two months ago that the importation of fuel was too important a matter, as has been demonstrated, to remain entirely outside of Government control; and recent events, recent rumours and alarms have only fortified me in this opinion. I believe that all hon. Members in this House join with me in very much hoping that the Government will have the wish, and will prove able to keep down the price of oil in Barbados and prevent any further rise in the cost of electricity to the people of Barbados.

The Question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 27th August, 1974, at 10.30 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 4.25 p.m.