

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, 15th January, 1974

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

PRESENT

His Honour N. G. A. MAXWELL, LL.B., (Speaker); Hon. C. E. TALMA, C.B.E., (Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the House); Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, (Minister of Home Affairs); Mr. R. St.C. WEEKES, J.P.; Mr. W. R. LOWE, J.P., (Chairman of Committees); Mr. W. C. B. HINDS; His Honour C. A. E. HOPPIN, (Deputy Speaker); Mr. L. S. CRAIG; Hon. F. G. SMITH, Q.C., S.C., B.A., (Minister of Communications and Works); Mrs. G. L. EASTMOND; Hon. P. M. GREAVES, B.A., (Minister of Housing, Lands, Labour and National Insurance); Mr. H. deB. FORDE, M.A., LL.B.; Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE, (Minister of Health and Welfare); Hon. A. MORRISON, (Minister of Agriculture, Science and Technology); Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.), (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport) and Mr. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M.

Prayers were read.

WELCOME FOR HONOURABLE MEMBERS BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER:

I would like to extend a warm welcome back to all Honourable Members to this place, and to express the hope that the business of the nation will be conducted with expedition and statesmanlike qualities.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Minutes of this Honourable Chamber for Tuesday the 11th December, 1973, and Tuesday, the 18th December, 1973, are before you for confirmation. If there are no corrections or alterations, these two sets of Minutes will be confirmed. There being no corrections or alterations, the Minutes for Tuesday, the 11th December, 1973, and Tuesday, the 18th December, 1973, are duly confirmed.

ACCOUNTANT GENERAL'S ACCOUNTS AND STATEMENTS FOR JULY, 1972

Mr. SPEAKER:

I lay before this Honourable Chamber the Accounts and Statements for the month of July, 1972, as prepared by the Accountant General.

REPAIRS TO THE AMPLIFICATION SYSTEM

Mr. SPEAKER:

Hon. Members will have notice that the amplification system is back in working order. The wires have been placed in conduits, and I hope that there will be no recurrence of the breakdown of this system which is so essential to the quality of the debates and the efficiency of Parliament in general.

LETTER FROM AUDITOR GENERAL RE THE APPROPRIATION AND REVENUE

ACCOUNTS, etc

Mr. SPEAKER:

I have a communication from the Auditor General which I will read to hon. Members. It is dated 14th January, 1974 "Sir,

STATEMENTS OF ACCOUNT OF THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL, APPROPRIATION AND REVENUE ACCOUNTS AND THE DUTIES OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Section 26 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, 1964, as amended by the Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Acts, 1967, and 1969, provides that the Auditor General shall report annually as soon as possible and not later than the last day of December following the close of the financial year the results of his examination of the Accounts of the Island. Such report shall be addressed to the Speaker of the House of Assembly and a copy transmitted to the Senate for information.

2. I have to inform you that it has not been possible to submit the report which became due by the end of December 1973 inasmuch as the relevant account and statements to be transmitted by the Accountant General, as required by Section 10(2) of the Principal Act, as amended, have not yet been received.

3. I consider I should also draw attention to the fact that:-

(i) there are a number of revenue as well as appropriation accounts for the year which are still

outstanding;

(ii) the accounts and statements due to be transmitted by the Accountant General by the end of July 1972 in respect of the financial year 1971—72 are also still outstanding;

(iii) the account and statements in respect of the year 1970—71, to which reference was made at paragraph 3(ii) of my letter No. A2(l)/1973/48 dated 31st January, 1973, were received on 9th April, 1973, but the annual report due thereon still remains to be prepared and transmitted owing to the fact that a similar report for the previous year (1969-70) has only recently been completed and transmitted (19th November, 1973).

4. The apparent delay in preparing and transmitting the report for the year 1970—71 is to be regretted. It should be pointed out however, that the relevant account and statements were received relatively soon after those in respect of the previous year (1969—70).

5. It should also be pointed out with regard to the programme of work of the Department, which is required to be covered at least once in every year, that during the past several months there has been certain constraints, mainly in connection with supporting staff, under which it is apparently expected that the duties of the Auditor General are to be performed.

6. In a memorandum dated 14th November, 1972, the attention of the Public Service Commission was specially drawn to "the weakening of the Audit Staff at the upper level" which was "likely to do great harm to the scope and effectiveness of the (audit) programme of work".

7. More recently the following memorandum was addressed to the Chief Establishments Officer to whom during April 1972 proposals for re-organization of the staff structure of the Audit Department had been submitted: —

"No: E.6/1973/565

Chief Establishments Officer,

THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) ORDER, 1973

Reference the Addendum to the above mentioned Order, and in particular to the part in connection with '1. Auditor General'

2. For ease of reference I will quote the relevant part of the Addendum: —

The creation of the following additional posts —

1 Senior Auditor - \$9, 300 - \$12, 300 auditors - \$7, 500 - \$9, 000

The provision of additional posts will enable this Department to cope with the increased work load

arising out of the introduction of the new payable order system.'

3. I consider I should draw attention to the fact, in this connection, that the posts involved had been created on a temporary basis since July 1971 and have now been established on a permanent basis. It seems that in the best interest of the Department the true position should have been made clear.

4. In view of the recent survey of the Department which was carried out by the Organisation and Management Division of the Prime Minister's Office, I consider that attention should be specially drawn to this matter.

(Sgd.) G. B. Brandford,

Auditor General.

5th December, 1973.

c.c: Director, Finance and Planning Director, Organisation and Management Division."

8. It should be mentioned that my comments, which were invited, as a result of the Survey under reference above, were submitted to the Director of the Organization and Management Division on the 12th November, 1973.

9. It is therefore anticipated that efforts which were made with a view to reorganizing the structure of the staff of the Department will be successful and that there will consequently be a general increase in the strength of the staff to assist in coping with the increasing duties and responsibilities.

10. I consider that you should be made aware of the situation for the information of Parliament.

I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant,

G. B. Brandford Auditor General.

His Honour the Speaker, The House of Assembly, Public Buildings, BRIDGETOWN.

c.c: Clerk of Parliament

Director of Finance and Planning."

Messrs. C. L. Bolden and E. D. Mottley entered the Chamber and took their seats.

DOCUMENTS LAID

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following documents

(1) The National Insurance and Social Security (Benefit) (Amendment) Regulations, 1974.

(2) The National Insurance and Social Security (Collection of Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations, 1974.

(3) The National Insurance and Social Security (Self-employed Persons) (Amendment) Regulations 1974.

(4) The Severance Fund Contribution (Amendment)" Regulations, 1974.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Report of the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation for the year 1972-73.

On behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I am commanded to lay:

(1) The Public Officers Loan and Travelling Allowances (Amendment) Regulations, 1974.

(2) The Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for the eight months ended 30th November 1973.

(3) An Account of the Transactions in Rum in the several Districts of the Island for the Quarter ended 30th September 1973.

Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE:

Mr. Speaker I am commanded to lay the Report on the Health Services in Barbados for the year 1972.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the postage rates on packets transmitted from Barbados otherwise than by air mail.

I am asking the leave of this Honourable House to deal with this matter in all of its stages today. The matter has been circulated to all hon. Members, and you are now aware of the request which I will subsequently make. 12.15 p.m.

Also a Bill to amend the Post Office Act, 1911. I will make a similar request with respect to that.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, I beg to give notice of the Bill to amend the Final Appropriation (1969-70) Act, 1970.

On my own behalf, I beg to give notice of a Bill to provide for the implementation by Barbados of the Agreement establishing the Caribbean Investment Corporation and for connected purposes.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question standing in the name of the hon. Member for Bridgetown re the approved schools.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

To enquire of the appropriate Minister —

1. Will the Minister state how many schools applied for registration as approved schools for monetary grants from the Ministry of Education and were refused?
2. Will the Minister state (a) the name of each school and (b) the number of persons at each school?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question standing in the name of the same hon. Member re the monetary assistance to Private Secondary Schools.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

To enquire of the appropriate Minister —

Will the Minister state what are the factors taken into consideration by the Ministry before granting monetary assistance to Private Secondary Schools?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the same hon. Member re the issue of work permits.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

To enquire of the appropriate Minister—

1. How many work permits were issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs during the year 1973?
2. Will the Minister state
 - (a) the categories of persons to whom work permits were issued and
 - (b) how many work permits were issued in respect of each category?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question standing in the name of the hon. Member for St. Thomas re the appeals received by the Commissioner of Valuations.

Mr. CRAIG:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for St. Thomas has asked me to give notice of this Question on his behalf. I now seek the leave of this Honourable House to ask the Question.

Mr. SPEAKER:

Leave will be granted.

Mr. CRAIG:

To enquire of the Minister of Finance —

1. How many appeals have been received by the Commissioner of Valuations in respect of tax valuations made under the new Act?
2. How many of the appeals related to area or description only and how many related to the assessments of value either solely or in conjunction with other objections?
3. How many appeals have been allowed (a) in respect of mistakes of area or description (b) in respect of faulty assessments of value?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question standing in the name of the hon. Member for St. Peter re the Lower First Forms in Grammar Schools.

Mr. HINDS:

To enquire of the appropriate Minister —

What is Government's policy relating to Lower First Forms in Grammar Schools?

2. Do all Grammar Schools now carry a Lower First Form?
3. If the answer to No. 2 above is in the negative, are children at schools without a Lower First Form at any sort of a disadvantage?
4. If the answer to No. 3 above is in the negative, is the progress of children at Schools with a Lower First Form being retarded in any respect?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question standing in the name of the same hon. Member re the teaching in Sixth forms at Grammar Schools.

Mr. HINDS:

To enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport

Are Economics, Politics and Sociology taught in the sixth forms at Grammar Schools which carry those forms?

2. If not, why not?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question standing in the name of the same hon. Member re the numerical strength of the teaching body in this Island.

Mr. HINDS:

To enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport

Is the Minister aware of the numerical strength of the teaching body in this Island?

2. Will the Minister consider the necessity for establishing a Society or Council or other institution for the purpose of determining standards of education and professional attainment for all grades of teachers within the nation?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question which stands in the name of the same hon. Member re the training in Day Nurseries and Nursery Schools.

Mr. HINDS:

To enquire of the appropriate Minister —

What provision was made between 1962 and 1973 for the training of persons responsible for the training of children under five years of age in (a) Day Nurseries and (b) Nursery Schools?

2. If persons were trained, how many on completion were assigned to schools or institutions accommodating children over five years but under eleven years of age?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the same hon. Member re the bad state of repair of floors in several schools.

Mr. HINDS:

To enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport.

Is the Minister aware that the floors of several school buildings are in a bad state of repair?

2. With a view to eliminating threats to limb and life of pupils, teachers, janitors and others using schools with such floors, would the Minister take immediate steps to remedy the situation?

3. Was any attempt made to repair any floors of schools during vacation periods during the financial years 1971-72 and 1972-73, so far?

4. Would the Minister give the full list of schools referred to at No. 3 above?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the same hon. Member re the number of nurses hospitalised at the sick bay at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. HINDS:

To enquire of the Minister of Health and Welfare -

How many Nurses attached to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital were hospitalized in the sick bay for

Nurses at that Institution during the year 1973?

2. How many were warded in the General Wards during the year? How many were warded in the Pay Ward?

3. If sick Nurses were detained in the General Wards, who ordered such detention?

4. On what date did a sick Nurse quit the General Ward without being discharged by a Medical Doctor?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the same hon. Member re the proposed introduction of the New Education Act.

Mr. HINDS:

To enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport

When does Government propose introducing into this Honourable House the new Education Act which was promised since 1962 by the Honourable Minister who then held the Education Portfolio?

2. What steps have been taken between 1962 and 31st December, 1973 to ensure that the requirement for teachers in public institutions can be met by the time the promised new Act becomes a reality?

3. What are the present requirements for teachers in all Primary Schools, Grammar Schools, Secondary Modern or Comprehensive Schools, the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic?

4. How many teachers were trained at Erdiston Teachers' College between 1962 and 1973 to teach the following:

(a) Children of the 5 - 11 age groups;

(b) Children in the 11 - 14 age-groups and

(c) Children in the 14 - 18 age groups?

5. How many trainees from (a) Secondary Modern or Comprehensive Schools and (b) Grammar Schools were admitted to Erdiston Teachers' Training College between 1962 and the end of the academic year 1973? .

6. Is the Minister aware that the pre-Erdiston Course is inadequate for preparing teachers for the teaching of English and for Arithmetic even at the Primary level of education?

7. Does the Minister have any plans for improving this situation?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the same hon. Member re the meetings of the Advisory Board of Education.

Mr. HINDS:

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?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the same hon. Member re the Parent-Teacher and Old Scholars' Associations.

Mr. HINDS:

To enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport-

What is the policy of the Government with respect to the organisation and control of such Institutions as Parent-Teacher Associations and Old Scholars' Associations? 12.25 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the said hon. Member re the employment of persons serving at Her Majesty's Customs.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Speaker, 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, hence the retrenchment?

4. For how long has this alleged overstaffing situation existed?

5. Prior to the retrenching of the five persons abovementioned, had the workload of Her Majesty's Customs subsided in any particular? If so, in what respect, and in what branch or branches?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the said hon. Member re the Guard Room keys at Her Majesty's Customs.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, to enquire of the appropriate Minister

Were the Guard Room keys at Her Majesty's Customs reported stolen or misplaced at anytime 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?

4. Will the Minister explain this apparent breakdown in administration and in human and interpersonal relationships at Her Majesty's Customs?

5. What steps has the Minister taken or proposes to take to improve the conditions as at No. 4 above?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the said hon. Member re the provision for teachers' cottages.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Speaker, to enquire of the appropriate Minister

At how many schools — Grammar, Primary or Senior Elementary — was provision made for teachers' cottages to be utilized for the housing of Head teachers between 1962 and 1973?

2. How many such cottages were occupied at any time during 1962-1973?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the said hon. Member re the libraries at Secondary Schools.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport-

Is it a fact that the libraries at Secondary Schools are inadequately equipped to meet present day demands?

2. If the answer is in the affirmative, what is being done to improve the situation.

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the said hon. Member re the persons on contract at the various Grammar Schools in the Island.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport-

How many members of staff of each of the ten (10) Grammar Schools are (a) on contract (b) acting and (c) retired and re-hired?

2. How many qualified Barbadians applied for teaching posts at each of the ten (10) Grammar Schools to begin work at the commencement of the present academic year?

3. How many Barbadian applicants were graduates; and how many were appointed at each of the ten schools where vacancies existed?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the said hon. Member re the resignation of a staff member at Harrison College.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Speaker, to enquire of the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport-

Is the Minister aware that a young Barbadian, who joined the staff of Harrison College in September, 1973 has already resigned to return overseas?

2. Is the Minister aware that the said Barbadian alleges discrimination relating to salary, and work schedules as being responsible for his short stay at Harrison College?

3. In the interest of Barbadians overseas who might desire to return home, and serve the country, would the Minister investigate the allegations of discrimination as at No. 2 above and make a statement thereon?

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Question by the said hon. Member re the conditions at Seawell International Airport.

Mr. HINDS:

Mr. Speaker, to enquire of the appropriate Minister

Is the Minister aware that conditions at Seawell, as an international airport, must measure up to certain set standards?

2. Is the Minister aware that the number of firemen for duty at Seawell International Airport fell from 13 to as low as 7 men on several occasions during the month of December, 1973?

3. Is the Minister aware that as a result of No. 2 above planes landed at Seawell International Airport between 20th. and 23rd December, 1973 without adequate fire coverage?

4. Is the Minister aware that with Government accepting the 40-hour week for employees firemen are

still working 96 hours per 7-day week, and without overtime pay?

5. Is it a fact that there is no permanent ambulance service at Seawell International Airport?

6. Does the potency of the Foam for use by Fire Services at Seawell International Airport have an expiry date? If so, how long has the present stock been retained since expiry date?

7. Has the Minister given any consideration to the fact that the Fire Station at Seawell, as presently sited, does not afford firemen direct and un-interrupted access to arriving aircraft requiring such services?

8. Will the Minister take early steps to consider re-siting the said Fire Station to afford firemen an unobstructed view of alighting aircraft and access to such planes requiring services?

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Final Appropriation (1969-70) Act, 1970 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.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to provide for the implementation by Barbados of the Agreement establishing the Caribbean Investment Corporation and for connected purposes, 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.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

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

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

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

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to inform you that the Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 162 asked by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is now ready. Also, the Parliamentary Question No. 164 asked by the said hon. Member, as well as Parliamentary Question No. 166 asked by the said hon. Member, the Leader of the Opposition, are now ready.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to inform you that the Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 133 asked by the hon. Member for St. Joseph is now ready. Also on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning I beg to inform you that the Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 147 asked by the hon. Member for St. Joseph is now ready.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to inform you that the Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 143 asked by the hon. Member for the City of Bridgetown, is now ready.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to inform you that the Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 134 asked by the hon. Member for St. Joseph is now ready.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

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

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

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

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 3 on the Order Paper be the First Order of the Day.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that,

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 12.35 p.m.

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE OF THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS
"BRADFIELD", COUNTRY ROAD TO THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN
ASSOCIATION**

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

Mr. Speaker, for several years, the Young Women's Christian Association occupied the old headmaster's house on the grounds of the old Combermere School at Weymouth. The Y.W.C.A. has

been doing very useful work in this community. They expanded to the extent that they outgrew the old premises, which they occupied, but apart from that, it was also felt that at the handing over of Weymouth Grounds to the Royal Barbados Police Force, the opportunity could be taken at the same time to pass on to the police that same building for the use by the Royal Barbados Police Force as an Officers' Mess, a matter for which they had been pressing for several years, and on which the Date Commission of 1965 commented.

About two years ago, the Government acquired "Bradfield" and offered this building, which is a very large building, to the Young Women's Christian Association. Hon. Members may remember that this building was once occupied by the G.F.S., so that in several respects it is suitable for the kind of work the Y.W.C.A. carries on. The property consists of two buildings, a main building and a cottage consisting of two flats at the back of the main building. The Y.W.C.A. found "Bradfield" very suitable and they have been occupying it for several months now. Since then, they have asked for the lease of the property because they want to carry out certain structural alterations. This has met with the approval of the Cabinet, and it is hoped that Parliament will give the necessary sanction for the lease to be granted to this Association on the terms set out in the Addendum.

Mr. Speaker, I think that for the sake of the record, these terms and conditions set out here are worthwhile reading. The Addendum reads as follows:

"It is proposed subject to the approval of Parliament to lease to the Young Women's Christian Association the parcel of land together with the dwellinghouse thereon described in the Schedule on the following terms and conditions:-

- (a) (i) the term of the lease to be for 25 years, with an option to renew;
- (ii) rental of \$2, 400 per annum to be payable quarterly in advance and to be reviewed at the end of five years and periodically thereafter; the rental to be based on the rent which it is estimated the Association could receive for one of the two apartments on the property;
- (iii) the Y.W.C.A. to renovate the buildings and maintain them in a condition satisfactory to the Minister;
- (iv) no structural alterations to be made to any of the buildings or any additional buildings constructed without the prior approval in writing of the Minister;
- (v) the property to be used as a hostel for girls and for other programmes conducted by the Association;
- (b) the Association should be granted a moratorium in respect of the rent for the first five years of tenancy.

In order to give additional assistance, Mr. Speaker, to this Association the Government has agreed to grant a moratorium to the Association with respect to the rents for a period of five years. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

I beg to second that.

Mr. CRAIG:

Mr. Speaker, I am very sure that anything which is done to accelerate the progress of the youth of the country will meet with my blessing. There is hardly anything in this Resolution which would cause any long drawn out debate, but I would just like to make one comment. I would like in the interest of all concerned not only to see the Y.W.C.A. expand and burst at its seams by way of its physical surroundings, but also I would like to see them take it to other parts of the country. They could possibly use some of these community centres which are only used for dances, and those in authority might find it possible to encourage the Y.W.C.A., like the Y.M.C.A., to go further a field and take the Y.W.C.A. to areas in the country districts, places like Speightstown, Oistin, Belleplaine.

I am quite sure that the Y.W.C.A. could play a more important role than that which it has already played. I say this quite sincerely, and I would also join with the Minister in saying that they have been doing a rather good job over the years. As far as this aspect of the Resolution is concerned, it has my blessing and I am sure that there is no adverse comment which one could possibly make about the Y.W.C.A.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Speaker, there is only one point I would like to make on this. In paragraph (a) (ii) of the Addendum, the statement made there is very vague, and I would hope that we are not going to find ourselves in the same situation which arose in relation to the lease of the piece of land next to the Stadium that owing to the vagueness of the terms of the lease, the ownership is not clearly defined. Those of us who practise law would know that there should be specific terms setting out these things. In this paragraph I mentioned, it only says that a rental of \$2, 400 per annum should be payable quarterly in advance and should be reviewed at the end of five years and periodically thereafter. I would have thought that those who were negotiating this lease would have stated specific periods for review and not just leave it as "periodically thereafter". I would think that the Y.W.C.A. would be in a very strange position, not knowing whether the Government would call on them year after year for a review of the rent.

I would think that if we are to pass such a Resolution, Parliament in itself should make sure that the terms are specific terms rather than vague terms as set out in the Addendum here. We have never been able, since I have been in here, to see a Draft Lease which has been put forward and get statements which no one knows after the Resolution has been passed whether the people are carrying out the terms set out in the Resolution. I would have thought that this would have been done as far as the Y.W.C.A. is concerned; my personal view is that the rents should be viewed at more specific periods.

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

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 4 on the Order Paper which stands in the name of the Hon. Minister of Housing, Lands, Labour and National Insurance be the next Order of the Day. It is a Bill to amend the Severance Payments Act, 1971.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON:

I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 12.45 p.m.

THE SEVERANCE PAYMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1973

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

Mr. Speaker, in 1971 Parliament passed the Severance Payments Act, which was amended before the scheme came into operation, towards the end of 1972, and the scheme has been operating for one full year now. There has been one problem, which I consider worthwhile bringing to the attention of Parliament and seeking some adjustments to the Act as it stands. When the Act was to have been amended, Cabinet agreed at the time that there should be no rebate to firms in respect of persons who had been severed before any contributions were paid into the Scheme. That had been agreed by Cabinet and had been put up as a drafting instruction to the Legal Department. Through some oversight, Mr. Speaker, that was omitted from the draft, and the draft as enacted came to Parliament. This has now been discovered and it is sought to rectify that position because we do not feel it is right that firms should try to create a charge on what does not exist, in fact what would have been the case with persons who had been severed since 1969, 1970 and 1971 before they had been making any contributions to the Fund in respect of persons whom they had paid because they had an agreement with the Barbados Workers' Union and they may now be seeking to have a 50 per cent rebate.

We did not at the time, when we ourselves reviewed the Act, feel it was right; we still do not feel it is right and we are now seeking to have the necessary adjustments made.

Opportunity is taken too, Mr. Speaker, to make provision for the administrative cost of the severance payments scheme. As is well known, the scheme is administered by the National Insurance Board, and this in itself would reduce the administrative cost of the scheme if it had been operating as an independent body. I think it may also be well known that the National Insurance Department has a working arrangement with the Post Office in respect of the administrative cost undertaken by the Post Office, so that on an allocation basis a lump sum is paid into the Post Office out of National Insurance Funds in respect of work done for the National Insurance by the Post Office.

Similarly, it is proposed in respect of the work undertaken by the National Insurance Department for severance payments that a lump sum payment be made out of the Severance Payments Fund into the National Insurance Fund for having undertaken the administrative cost and burden of this Scheme.

These are the two important matters brought before this Chamber in the form of an amending Bill. I think hon. Members will be interested to hear something of the state of the Severance Payments Fund one year after operations. As at 1st December, 1973, the contributions during that year amounted to \$367, 741.41; interest on fund \$3, 083.30, making a total income of \$370, 824.71. Expenditure in terms of rebates to employers was \$94, 075.79. The balance in the Fund stands in excess of \$276, 000.

Now I want to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that so far National Insurance has not paid any rebates to

employers for persons who were severed and qualified for benefits under the Act before the Scheme came into operation. The rebates to employers of over \$94, 000 represent rebates to employers for persons who were severed since the Fund came into operation. The Tribunal under the Severance Payments Fund has been long in being established. I understand that no representations have been made as yet for matters to be referred to the Tribunal. Perhaps one reason could be that it was known that the Tribunal had not been established. In another couple of weeks the names of those persons who constitute the Tribunal will be gazetted and the Tribunal will be fully established. I think Mr. Speaker, that those few comments represent what has been happening with and under National Insurance and Severance Payments during the first full year of operation, and I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE:

I beg to second that.

Mr. GREAVES:

Mr. Speaker, there are a few comments I should like to make on this amendment. I should first like to say that it is interesting to see that at long last we have had this amendment which would enable workers who are entitled to severance payment to get it, because it is within our knowledge that employers who are entitled to pay severance pay to workers who are severed have been fooling around and pushing a lot of blame on the Severance Payments Board. Their argument has been that they are not going to pay out any money unless they are sure they are going to get their money back from the Severance Payments Board even although they do not qualify for this, and I think it is important that this matter should be put right. I would hope that when we get this matter on the Statute Book that every effort should be made to ensure that those people who are entitled to get the pay from their employers, get it as quickly as possible.

I was hoping, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to suggest that some effort should be made to impose a time period within which severance payments should be made, because again one gets the situation where a person might be severed from his job, and I think we must realise today how important a job is for a worker, and when a worker loses his job, all his means of support are cut away and he has to go and look for another job so that he can keep himself and family going. We would like to see a situation where a time period is imposed on employers for the payment of any severance pay which is due to be paid, because you get the situation where people are kept waiting for a long time. There is one particular case that I am dealing with now. I have been trying to get an answer, but so far I have not been able to because of this same matter of shifting blame from one area to another, and this relates to the workers at Fairfield Factory who had been severed when the factory closed down at the end of the last crop. So far these people have not been paid their money, and the blame is being shifted between the people who are liable to pay and the National Insurance Office which is administering the Severance Payments Fund.

I therefore hope, Mr. Speaker, that this time period which I am talking about within which severance payment should be paid is something which the Government will look into and enforce because I consider it is of extreme importance. As I said, it is interesting and indeed comforting to see that an effort is being made to let employers know once and for all what kind of rebates they are entitled to and what claims they can make. 12.55 p.m.

We hope that they will not shift their responsibility to their workers or employees by trying to push the

blame on the National Insurance Board.

Mr. FORDE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be a bit more wide-ranging than the hon. Member who has just sat down since, if I may say so with some humility, during the past year I have had, on numerous occasions, to advise both employers and employees on the Severance Payments Act. It is a very difficult piece of legislation for people to comprehend. I would like to compliment the Director of National Insurance on the very useful booklet which he has put out as a guide, and I would recommend that he should go a bit further and, probably, deeper and put out a few more booklets so that both the employers and the employees would be able, in simple language, to appreciate their rights and obligations under the legislation. This legislation has been copied, in a very substantial manner, from the United Kingdom Redundancy Act, 1965, and the United Kingdom Contracts of Employment Act, 1963, and, like most legislation which has been copied, it carries with it the defects of that legislation and, in some respects, part of it tends to be almost irrelevant and at sometimes unworkable.

I would have thought that the Minister, with a year's experience behind him would be satisfied that there is need for, in some instances, very urgent and further amendments to parts of this legislation. My experience teaches me that, since the coming into being of the Severance Payments Act in this Island, some businesses have been wound up; some employers have died, and the position is that their employees must, therefore, look to the Severance Payments Fund if they are to be compensated.

In some of the cases where companies have been wound up, there have been insolvencies, and the companies do not have enough money to pay their debts. There is no provision in the Severance Payments Act which makes the right to severance payment a priority in the winding up of a company, regardless of whether that company is solvent or insolvent, or a priority in the administration of the estate of a deceased person. In my view this is wrong because, through no fault of his own, a workman sometimes finds himself almost deprived of any employment with a waiting period which could have deleterious effects on his sanity far less his usefulness to his family and to the community. It seems to me that we should amend the relevant Administration of Estates Act and the Companies Act by bringing a substantive amendment on this point before the House, and I now commend this idea to the Minister. It is one that, I think, is worthwhile looking at and one which he should pursue as soon as possible.

I, too, have been very concerned, as the hon. Member for St. Lucy has been, about the manner in which some employers have been hiding behind the loophole in the Act by saying that they will not pay severance until they are assured of their rebates. May I say that, in many instances, the fault has been due to the fact that the legislation was not clear on this point; but, in my view, it should be made clear that employers have a duty, in the first instance, to pay severance to their employees and it is only after that that they are entitled to claim a rebate of 50% from the severance fund.

Sir, the Minister does not believe that the failure to set up the tribunal with much more speed has had any effect at all on representations in relation to people who are entitled to severance. If this is his view, then it is not an accurate one. (Hon. P. M. GREAVES: "That is not my view.") The Minister has indicated sotto voce that it is not his view. I am glad to hear that. I want to point out that there are many persons who have had to seek the advice of Counsel, the Union and the people operating the severance fund as to how to recover severance, particularly in circumstances where their past employers have been insolvent or have died. I could cite individual cases, but would not do that here. I would ask the Minister

if he would advert to the necessity to strengthen the hands of the Director of National Insurance. The duty to collect monies under the Act has been placed on the Director of National Insurance and likewise the duty to pay up, but I am not sure that the staffing position enables him to give as much attention to this aspect of labour welfare legislation as he has been able to give to the National Insurance and Security Fund.

Sir, I believe this is a matter that needs quick action, and I would ask the Government to hasten the appointment of the tribunal as well as to provide adequate staff in this sphere so that the legislation could be properly implemented. I should like to talk about the tribunal a bit. We have, in the last fifteen or twenty years, been setting up from time to time various administrative tribunals all of whom demand, according to the legislation, a chairman, with some sort of legal knowledge, supported by other persons from the employers and employees side.

I believe that if one looks at the various Acts under which such tribunals are constituted, one will find that there is an urgent need for a permanent Chairman with experience in labour welfare fields, who might have some legal training and who would be there in order to administer these various duties. It is not satisfactory to depend on people merely to give very limited part-time services - services which must sometimes await their other businesses. I think that there is a case for combining the functions under the National Insurance legislation and the functions under the Town and Country Planning Act, and under this Act and various other Acts in the body of one person who could be appointed as the chairman of the various tribunals. He could, at least, make sure that the cases which come up from time to time are being prosecuted speedily and that people will have their rights enforced.

I am not too happy about the part-time nature of duties as Chairman that sometimes have to await the availability of the Chairman himself. I can mention, for instance, another bit of legislation — the whole of the land tax legislation — that will call for a lot of time on the part of the people appointed to the tribunal. I hope the Minister will give serious consideration to looking at this view in order to see if we cannot get much better administration of these various Acts than we have been getting before. 1.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that on the next occasion when there is an amendment to this legislation that I will also see the removal of still more anomalies. It seems to me highly wrong that people like part-time fishermen who are referred to as share crop fishermen should be exempted from the provisions of this legislation.

It seems to me equally wrong that persons who are domestic servants but are related to an employer should be exempted from the benefits of this legislation. Neither social justice nor any logic would seem to make this exemption necessary when the same applies to the wife of a person who is working with that person in his employment. It seems to me to be an absolute case of discrimination that a woman, merely because she is the wife of an employer should not be entitled to severance payment if he severs her employment. If she is working in a partnership she is jointly liable and would be so entitled, but if she is the sole employee she is not entitled to claim.

There is no sense in it except that we have fallen victim to the English statute and have taken it over willy nilly. It is discrimination against a wife in particular. Wherever I see it, it bothers me. The Act needs amending to get rid of these exemptions in this sphere.

In another sphere, we find that persons in the public service should be looked at afresh from the point of view of Severance Payment legislation. I think it is time that the whole ambit of the legislation governing public servants should be looked at. Again we have fallen prey to our heritage for what it is worth, and have taken statutes from England and kept them regardless to whether they are relevant or whether they bring about social injustice.

We need to have a comprehensive look at the needs of public servants and see if they should not have more benefits accruing to them under this legislation. Particularly if we have retrenchment in the public field at any time they should have a wider scope in this matter.

I believe that points which I have made were made in a minority report at another time by the honourable Member for St. Michael-West. I share his sentiments and I hope that we will review this legislation more comprehensively and that the legislation will not be so onerous that we cannot widen the scope.

I think that we have moved from the concept of some people not having as much right in their jobs as people in other fields. Perhaps in this coming year we should be able to look at this legislation in a much more comprehensive manner.

Mr. WALCOTT:

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that I cannot join with my colleague, the hon. Member for St. Lucy, in welcoming the amendment of this Bill. This Act is symptomatic of the Barbadian copycat style. Too many people like to copy. This is an example of "easy lesson, good for dunce," people who do not pay attention to what they write or what they say.

I agree with the hon. Member for Christ Church-West that this is a bad Bill. Any lawyer who sat down, copied this redundancy Act lock, stock and barrel and pushed it in the Minister's hand, has produced the most offensive piece of legislation that has seen the light of day in the last 20 years.

The fact is that before the Act was implemented, you had to amend it. You had to amend it first, before you could bring it into operation. That is why I do not believe in a lawyer, just because he is a lawyer. If he writes something that is bad, it is bad whether he is a lawyer or professor; and that is the trouble with this Bill.

This, sir, is a bit of clowning. We have too many clowns in Barbados. I sat with some clowns on a committee, who went through the stupidity of looking for a compromise. The Minister brought down this legislation just before the elections and it was passed. We had no time to go through it. We were fighting an election and did not have time to correct the mistakes of a lawyer. Now we have this on the Statute Book and we are amending it.

I do not think that you are discriminating against women alone. You may be the relative of an employer and whether you are a woman or a man it has the same effect. What is bad in this legislation is that in 1964 I moved legislation in this Chamber asking the Government to set up a committee to study this because we had severance payment by agreements and the employers had to pay out of their pockets.

There was no question of getting repaid for what you paid. It was an expense that you made the employer carry as an obligation. This came to a head when we had fires in Broad Street. Fogarty's and Cave Shepherd were burnt and people were left without jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this is what I know, and the Member for Christ Church West must know this too, that there are employees in Barbados for whom the companies already make provision, I refer to people drawing salaries of \$2, 000 and \$3, 000 a month, and the company makes provision for them and they set aside money for this, month after month and year after year; but we had some clowns who did not realise that the business must carry this. 1.15 p.m.

We have some employers in Barbados who, when certain things happen, they start ducking and hiding. A man or woman is working with an employer, and the idea of severance pay has nothing to do with redundancy. Our basis of severance pay is not based on redundancy. In the United Kingdom they passed a Redundancy Bill based on the fact that the English Trade Unions were opposed to the idea of the technological change which was sweeping Europe. Because of the conditions which prevailed at the time and in order to get the workers to agree to certain specific matters they had to pass a Redundancy Bill. There are people in the United States of America who, during their unemployment, they are getting benefits, but the clowns in Barbados must know that nobody in Barbados receives any legislative benefit when he or she is unemployed. So these are some of the things that the idiots must know. We have some idiots in Barbados who do not know these things. It happens that in Barbados there are circumstances in which the employer who is at the top gets a benefit but the poor worker does not get any benefit, so that there are circumstances which are completely unsuitable to our needs.

This whole Act wants a complete revision, Mr. Speaker. There are Clauses in this which need throwing away. A simple Act could have been written dealing with severance. At the beginning, we started off with severance but now our whole social conscience must change. The position today is that a man is working with a firm but there is no redundancy in the sense that the business is closing down or not continuing, but the man has made a contribution. People must understand the facts of life. Today nobody is going to employ a man for the first time at the age of 60 years. In this community if you set up a fund you should set it up on the basis that you can collect enough money and you can have a moratorium of so much for the first two years and after that you can have a freeze point. It is not easy to have an actuarial basis on severance; severance is not like that; severance is not like dying. Severance is a different thing. It is not a social insurance that you are carrying on. Now what do you find? You have a Bill that does not relate to the real problem that exists/You do not begin to make exceptions unless those exceptions are meaningful, because the exceptions do not represent any real saving. It is only a psychological matter. For example, a son or a daughter is not exempted from income tax because he or she is working with his or her father or mother. So the exemption is not fixed on such a basis as though you regard industry as some domestic servants. If you are working, for example, with a person the business must provide for paying people wages and salaries.

So as I mentioned earlier this is unsuitable to our needs. A lot of the Clauses in this could be torn up and thrown through the window. The whole Act has a lot of verbiage in it which has no bearing at all on what is going on in Barbados. Absolutely nothing at all. Quite a simple Act could have been drafted dealing with severance, when you are severed from your job, not on the basis of redundancy. The majority of people in this country went to work early. It is not uncommon for a man to do forty years work before he reaches the age of 65 years, and the poorer you are the longer you have to work because

you do not have the reserves to keep you. So if a man has been working forty years in a business and the business closes down, where are you leaving him to go to look for a job at the age of 60?

Severance, as I was saying, is not like dying. You can have an actuarial basis on dying but severance is different from that. We were getting severance in the sugar industry; we were getting severance by some employers who paid.

Now the Government, in this Bill, has agreed to make a rebate. I sat on a Board where these rebates are made and there were some instances where people normally would have made severance payment to persons without any question of getting any rebate. Now one of the problems, Mr. Speaker, arises where you do not have a staff to examine very carefully the bases of contribution to the fund. This has to be dealt with very skilfully because consideration has to be given to what is going to be the incidence of redundancy. Redundancy is not like a social insurance. It is something in business; so you will be subsidizing people to put certain people out of work to carry on their own business. 1.25 p.m.

If this is a working expense the business must carry it, and my contention and that of the Union has always been and still is that industry should be called upon to pay the full tax for severance pay. The Minister of Labour has a difficult Ministry, he does not have the people with the know-how, and I told them that this is a copycat Bill, you cannot copy a Bill from the United Kingdom just like that, you have to check the various Acts and other pieces of legislation. Ask any of the lawyers in the House how many cases they are going to court with on this business of severance pay. The amount of work you have to do for the fee you will charge makes nonsense of the whole thing, and I say that this severance payment exercise is one of torture. This Act as it stands is very mixed up, and all you need is a simple Act to deal with the specific requirement to compensate persons who lose employment through no fault of their own, and get down to that specific matter.

I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, we can do nothing but support this amendment, but I will join with those in telling the Minister that this Severance Payments Act is cumbersome and does not meet the requirements of today. If you are going to get people who are going to study the economics of the scheme, tell the people that this is the amount of money you require and let the law be so framed that you will be able to get rewards for the people when they lose their jobs. One of the reasons I agree with having a fund is because in this instance of those people who lose their jobs through no fault of their own the employers should pay money into the fund. This cannot be beyond the capacity of the people of Barbados, with a labour force of less than 100, 000 people, to work out the economics of a tax and a system to know how much money is required, but there must be more basic work in Barbados. If all the employers and all the workers were registered, if you had the statistical information about the distribution of labour in a proper manner, it should not be difficult to ascertain industry to industry, trade to trade, occupation to occupation, the level of money you will require to meet this scheme. I am satisfied that you have more money in the fund for severance pay than you require, because this is not a daily occurrence, this is only a contingency you get in business from time to time, but it cannot represent 10% of the labour force. Your redundancy bill cannot be 10% of your wage Bill, so it is going to be a microscopic amount of the total labour bill and it requires the sort of patience and understanding about the situation, and I hope now that the Minister has seen that this Bill is difficult to operate and that you should not have legislation which is social and labour legislation, when the legislation which is passed for the persons themselves to benefit from, the only way you can understand this is that each time they must engage an Attorney-at-Law because no simple person can understand this, and some of the lawyers

know that it is one of these Acts they would prefer not to have to deal with because the time they have to spend to get back \$30 a week would not be worthwhile and they would be ashamed to charge a fee when all they would get is \$150 in work and they would not be able to charge properly.

I hope the Minister will see that this is a bit of legislation which is too cumbersome. The modern trend in legislation is to make it simple and understandable that everybody can appreciate and understand it, that the content and the principle are sound and that the application of it is easy to understand. I hope this question of the employers not honouring their obligation does not arise, some of them have stated that they would not honour this obligation, but I feel if this legislation is going to make them honour it that we would not have any question about it, because I do not want to say anything more, but a thing like this can bring about a very serious industrial situation and the workers will have to take action to make the employers understand that legislation should be honoured even though the law gives them an escape clause.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Speaker, I shall not be long, I would like to say that during the drafting of this legislation, I was attorney General so I would know all about it. The strictures of the hon. Member for St. Michael West as well as those of the Hon. Member for Christ Church West are strictures I can only interpret as a tribute to Barbados because in no other territory or country throughout the world is there similar severance payment legislation. There is no other Caribbean territory which has severance payment legislation, therefore when the question of drafting this legislation arose, it was a question of seeing which other territories and countries had similar legislation, and of course I am sure that the Hon. Minister in replying will state that this up to date piece of legislation is an attempt by the Government to place on the Statute Book of this country an advanced piece of social legislation to ensure the rights of the workers in this country.

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

On the motion of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill Mr. LOWE took the Chair. 1.35 p.m.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed. Clause 3 was called.

Hon. P. M GREAVES:

Mr. Chairman, in Clause 3, subclause 6, there is a typographical error. It should read "An employer who" rather than "An employee who". If it is accepted as a typographical error, I would move that it stand part subject to that, otherwise I will move that the word "employee" in subclause 6 be deleted and the word "employer" substituted.

I beg to move that the word "employee" in subclause 6 be deleted and the word "employer" substituted therefor.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

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

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 3 as amended stand part.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

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

Clause 4 was called and passed.

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

On the separate motions of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, the Bill as amended was read a third time and passed. Its title was agreed to.

THE ELECTRICAL WIREMEN (LICENSING) BILL, 1973

Hon. C. E. TALMA. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Item No. 2 be the next Order of the Day.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

I beg to second that.

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

Mr. SPEAKER:

Order No. 2 stands in the name of the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works, and it is to move the Second Reading of a Bill to provide for the licensing of persons, who wire buildings for the supply of electricity, and for connected purposes.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Speaker, this is just one of a series of pieces of legislation in which the Government is satisfied that all those persons who hold themselves out as possessing any competence or skills should be properly regulated under the laws of Barbados. Whether they are dentists, doctors, lawyers or any other professional persons who practise a vocation, if the general public is to be protected from those who engage in these businesses without the relevant skills, then legislation will have to come to Parliament from time to time laying down both the minimum standard of competence, as well as a certain amount of discipline must be exercised in order that the public who are eventually the sufferers should be safeguarded against those who are not competent and who are quacks.

As you know, Barbados suffered from some devastating fires in Bridgetown and there was one in White Park, and the Government in its desire to find a reason for this colossal loss of property

established a Committee in Barbados under the Chairmanship of Sir Stanley Gomes, and in his report which is dated 8th April, 1970 dealing mainly with the fire at Messrs. D. V. Scott, the Commission stated among other things "We heard the evidence of a few "electricians" and self-styled "electrical contractors" which must clearly indicate that the Commission itself was not laughing at the electricians or contractors, but was expressing some doubt that they were not competent to call themselves either, who on occasion effected repairs or replacements to the affected electrical appliances on the premises of the Scott section, but the only conclusion to be drawn from their evidence and the statement of its owner, D. V. Scott & Co. Ltd. is that the electrical equipment and appliances of the firm's premises at the time of the fire and prior thereto by reason of inexpert, inefficient and clumsy attention to patent defects coupled with ignorance and oversight in regard to power voltage requirements in effect constituted fire hazards.

The Commission in its general recommendations for the prevention and control of outbreaks of fire which is contained in Part VI of the Report noted among other things that 50 per cent of the premises in the City of Bridgetown were wired 25 years ago and all need re-wiring, but there is not nor has there ever been any regulation or system governing the registration of electricians or wiremen, but any person posing as an electrician or wireman can effect or attempt to do repairs or make adjustments to electrical equipment or appliances or accessories. They considered that the evidence disclosed a state of affairs that called for arguable remedial measures. When it is considered, Mr. Speaker that the use of electrical equipment in Barbados is increasing fantastically it is amazing that there has not been more damage to more property and loss of life. One of the recommendations of the Committee was that the Government should enact legislation and regulations to make provision for the licensing and registration of electricians and wiremen. Consequently this piece of legislation is now before this Parliament.

The method of bringing matters to Parliament does take some time, and I regret it was not here before, but it has come and I do not think that hon. Members of the Opposition are opposed to it because I think they are as concerned as anybody else not only in their capacity as Members of the Opposition, but as citizens who may require the services of persons from time to time, they certainly would require that they be competent and efficient. A look therefore at the general principles of the Bill will show that we are establishing an Electrical and Wiremen's Licensing Board requiring all electrical wiremen to be licensed. The conditions of the applications are set out and the renewal of licences, and a certain fee will be charged for these licences. Obviously it requires paper work, forms have to be issued and the fee would not be more than a professional person can pay for the paper work and the administration which is involved.

We are going to set examinations based on the advice of the Electrical Engineer as well as the Engineering Association, and it is important to note that under Section 5 no academic qualification is required. That is you do not have to be a B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering. Section 5 of the Act clearly says that an application under this Act should be made to the Secretary in such form as the Board determines and shall in respect of the applicant state his full name and address, his date of birth, his qualifications and experience together with the educational institutions attended by him and any further information as the Board requires. 1.45 p.m.

I want it to be clearly understood that the electricians who have been discharging their functions with competence up to now have no fear at all that when they do apply for a licence that they must present a B.Sc., or some diploma, and so on. There is no requirement for this, and I have, carefully, insisted that

there should be no minimum qualifications. The Electrical Department will have a list of those who have been wiring houses competently all along; they will know those who are competent, and a licence is almost automatic. We also require that they be of good character because an electrician, obviously, has to go into people's houses and we cannot allow an electrician with a long list of criminal convictions to walk into a house and, perhaps, steal silver, or a gold ring, and so on. A good character is required in every profession, and I do not think anybody will quarrel about this.

Under Section 5(4), I shall ask for an amendment that no licence to practise may be issued to a person who has not attained the age of 21 instead of 18. The Government is looking at the entire age of majority. Now, under the law, I think all lawyers in the House will agree, in contracts there are certain limitations and legal liabilities which persons under 21 can escape, especially in relation to a contract. In order to avoid the position where an electrician under 21 may take a householder's money under a contract to do a job and then he refuses to do it leaving the householder in difficulties to recover his money because the man who contracted to do the job may be considered to be a minor, I have decided to change the age to 21. If he is 18 years, then it may be said that he has not yet reached the age of majority. Until the Government reduces the general majority age to 18, I will move an amendment that the age be 21 instead of 18. When the other amendment is brought before the House, then this amendment will be automatically reduced to 18 years.

We also have an Examination Board, and the Board will set examinations. The Electrical Inspector will make reports. There is also a provision for discipline. Complaints can be made to the Board, and the Board has a right to censure people, and so on, to ensure that certain persons conform to the best ethics and standards of their profession. We will also have an appeal tribunal giving those who have been refused a licence an opportunity to appeal to the tribunal. We are going to have on this tribunal people of integrity and honour who are primarily concerned with insisting that high standards are maintained in this profession. Regulations will be made under the Act, and there will be certain offences such as failure to produce your licence and so on.

I think on the whole, Mr. Speaker, this Honourable House will agree that this piece of legislation is long overdue. We hope, in due course, as a result of this legislation, to see a higher standard of competence in the wiring of houses. As a matter of fact, because of the lack of this piece of legislation, the Chief Electrical Inspector has had, on several occasions for a very minor fee, to make four, five, six or seven visits to the same house in order to make sure that wiring conforms to the minimum standard established for such a purpose. I commend this Bill to the House.

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

Hon. P. G. MORGAN. I beg to second that.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that at last the Government has seen fit to have brought down a Bill which deals with electricity, one of those most serious elements which in a modern society can destroy an entire community, in a very short space of time, but I must adopt the standard which was adopted in the previous Bill by the member for St. Michael West. I think that the draftsman and the Government must be blamed for trying to introduce a Bill in Parliament which differs so considerably from many other professional Bills. I would have thought that in introducing this Bill the Minister, who is also an

Attorney, would have taken time off to look at other professional Bills and bring them all in line.

First of all, when one begins to look at the Bill, there are several things which I consider are going to be more than cumbersome and are not going to work well. The Minister speaks about asking for an amendment to change the age from 18 to 21 for persons who wish to obtain a license. In this modern day, when one looks at the entire aspect of life in our society, one sees that young people are leaving school at the ages of 14, 15 and 16. If one looks at the sum of money which is granted under the Apprenticeship Scheme, one will see how little is given to an apprentice nowadays. Are you telling me that in 1974 the Minister will have the gumption to get up in this House and say that he is going to ask that the age be increased from 18 to 21 before a young man can have a licence to practise? What will happen to those practising electricians who have been to the Polytechnic and so on and who are holding certificates? I am referring to those electricians who are under 21 and who are holding certificates to practise. What is going to happen to them after we have passed this bit of legislation? I cannot understand this sort of thing. On the one hand you are trying to do something good, and on the other hand you are trying to cut off 90% of what you want to do.

Sir, I would have thought that the Minister would have introduced a Bill to reduce the age of majority as is done in Guyana, or that he would have made such a provision in this Bill as a forerunner to the other Bill rather than to increase the age in this Bill and compel those who are now professionals to be thrown back to the apprenticeship stage as from the passing of this Bill.

The next point I should like to deal with is the question of to whom the money must be paid. Why create a new secretary to receive money, when all of the other professional bodies are paying their money to the Registrar? The matter has to be published in the Official Gazette and so on. These are some of the things that I see are wrong in the Bill.

With regard to Section 20 of this Bill, why make the non-payment of a licence fee a civil debt to the Crown? This is unreasonable to me. Suppose a man at the age of 98, who has been registered under the Bill, decides that he is not practising any longer. As the Bill stands, he owes a civil debt to the Crown. I would have thought that anybody looking at this Bill, particularly the Minister who is a lawyer, would have seen all of these aspects of the Bill. As the hon. Member for St. Michael West has said, it appears that all they have done was to take the Bill from the Draftsman, bring it to Parliament, and push it through.

Mr. Speaker, looking at the Bill in its entirety, I would say that the substance of the Bill is commendable, but the actual mechanics of it are certainly not in keeping with modern-day practice. That is the most I will say at this stage.

The Question that the Bill be now read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 1.55 p.m.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

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

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. The House went into

Committee on the Bill Mr. LOWE took the Chair.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

I beg to move that Clause 2 stand part.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

I beg to second that. The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Parts 11, 111 and 1V were called and passed.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

I beg to move that Part 5 stand part.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES:

I beg to second that.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Chairman, again I disagree with Part 5 of the Bill. One fundamental aspect of English Law is that a man must be proven guilty of any offence before he can be branded with the offence. If you look at Part V you will see that it is not in keeping with the general rule of law. Part V, 11 (1) (c) says that where a wireman has been convicted of an offence or is alleged to have committed an offence under this Act or the rules; or (d) is alleged to have been guilty of gross negligence or inefficiency in performing his functions as a wireman; the Board may, without prejudice to subsection (2), (1) censure him; or (ii) suspend or cancel his licence.

This is what I think is more than unreasonable. If someone alleges something against a wireman, he can be called before the Board and have his licence cancelled. If he had been convicted of the offence, certainly, but he should not be made to suffer penalties by a mere allegation. I cannot agree with that at all.

The question that Part 5 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Part VI was called and passed.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

I beg to move that Part V11 stand part.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

I beg to second that.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Again I would like to draw attention to Section 20 in that it is unreasonable that licence fees which are payable under the Act and remain unpaid after 1 month from the date on which they became payable may be recovered as a debt due to the Crown in Civil proceedings before a Magistrate for District "A".

This is contrary to all other legislation dealing with the Professions. In this particular case it becomes a civil debt. It does not give an opportunity to a person who once registered to register again. If he registers late, wanting to practise again, he should be made to pay twice the amount or something like that; but I find it unreasonable that if a man does not want to register again he can be brought before the Civil Court.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

On a point of order. If you decide not to practise you are not due for licence fee.

Mr. BOLDEN:

The Hon. Minister does not even understand the legislation that he has put forward. Where does it say that in the Act?

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Unless I am a congenital idiot, section 4 says that a person who, after the commencement of this Act, desires to practise electrical wiring in Barbados shall obtain a licence in accordance with this Act.

If he does not desire to practise, he does not pay the fee. What nonsense is the Member talking now?

The question that Part VII stand part, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

The Schedule was called.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

I beg to move that this be the Schedule to the Bill.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

I beg to second that.

Mr. BOLDEN:

I will make my comments again. The Schedule says that the Electrical Wiremen Licensing Board shall consist of the Chief Engineer, ex officio. As far as I know there are several chief engineers in the Government. Which one is the Schedule referring to?

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

The Minister will be appointing the appropriate Chief Engineer.

Mr. BOLDEN:

The public at large has a right to know who will be the Chief Engineer. Will it be the Chief Engineer of the Waterworks Department, of the Public Works Department or the Government Electrical Department?

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

It will be the Chief Electrical Engineer.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Chairman, that is not in the Act,

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Chairman, I do not think that the Rules were suspended. It is now 2 o'clock and I think that the Sitting should be automatically suspended.

Mr. Chairman reported progress. SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair, reported accordingly and suspended the Sitting until 2.50 p.m. 105 p.m.

On resumption

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that this Sitting be suspended for ten minutes.

By the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in view of the fact that the Reporter was not here, I made that motion, but one has just come in. So I beg the leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am speaking on the motion for the withdrawal. I understand I do not know how accurate this is because the Clerk of Parliament is investigating the matter, but this is something of which I take a very serious view — I understand that the Reporters have not had their lunch, and that someone, some authorised or unauthorised person gave instructions that the Reporters are not to eat before Members of the House. If that is correct, I think it is very improper because I do not know of any progressive householder in Barbados today in which even the domestic staff would be required to wait to eat the meals that fall off the table of the masters or mistresses of the household, and as far as I am concerned, when we adjourn for lunch the Reporters do not get what lunch is left over from Members of the House, but they are entitled to have their own lunch; and I understand that even the Reporter who is in the House right now has not had his lunch, and if any such order was given by any of the officers in this House, and the Clerk of Parliament denies any responsibility for such an order, I suggest that the matter be investigated and I should like to disassociate myself from any responsibility or any knowledge of any such order or any such treatment of the servants of this House.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is something I want to say about this matter of instructions about who is to eat and who is not to eat; but if we are to be told that the Reporter who is an old and faithful servant of both Chambers of Parliament — Mr. Norville has not yet eaten — I want to suggest that this Sitting be not suspended but that the luncheon period be extended to allow him to go and eat so that he should not be working in here until three o'clock on an empty stomach, because there is too much of this — that Members are not allowed to eat before two o'clock — I am sorry that the Prime Minister has just left since speaking, because he and I have been victims in there, both of us wanted lunch and were told in

the face of a lot of lunch — the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition — we were told that we could not get lunch until the other Members were ready to eat. That was not the case in the former times; it does not facilitate service. If Members are allowed to go out and eat when they choose, in my opinion, it makes it easier for those who come out all at once, because there is not so much pressure on the service as if thirty people had to be served at the same time. If all the Members did not have to go and eat at ten past two the Reporters might have had a chance to eat already. They might have had a chance to eat while they were spending a forty-minute period; they might have eaten first before us, and I would like to suggest that we extend the luncheon interval in order to allow the present Reporter to have lunch.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it might be very embarrassing. The House has.....

Mr. CRAIG:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, ...

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

What are you rising on?

Mr. CRAIG:

I am rising on a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to know whether the Minister of Finance can be allowed to make two speeches. He has made a speech already. What is he on now, Sir?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

What are you on, because.....

Mr. CRAIG:

I am on a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, he just can't get up in here and talk as he likes.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

To the hon Member for St. James, will you please take your seat?

Mr. CRAIG I want to know.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I am addressing the hon. Member for St. James. Better behaviour is expected from the hon. Member.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

This is a very serious matter, Sir. This is not something for comedians. The Standing Orders of the House stipulate the intervals at which we should have lunch and when the House should adjourn, and so on. I do not have to quote the Standing Orders. During those recesses provision is made in the estimates for meals for Members of the House. I really do not agree with it, but the point is, I made the provision because that is what Members want, but provision is also made for the staff of Parliament and they are supposed to have their meals at the same time; not consecutively, like some kind of relay race, that one comes in and the other goes out and have meals; and the Sitting should not be suspended so that any Reporter or Reporters can eat. That is not provided for in the Standing Orders.

It has come to my knowledge that some one in authority has given instructions that the Reporters are not to eat until Members of the House have eaten, and I say that that is wrong. I am saying that there should be a vote of censure, and I am calling for an investigation to be carried out, and it may be on a very high official of this August Assembly that you might have to pass a vote of censure because it is undemocratic, and it is unconstitutional and it is contrary to the Standing Orders of this House.

So when the Leader of the Opposition says that we must now suspend the Sitting in order to allow the Reporters to eat, it means that we are going to have one luncheon interval for the House and then we have another cooling off period when the Reporters eat, and then at the end of that period you may find that the Clerks have not eaten, and we have another half hour for them and then we will be having a three-hour luncheon interval. I am not against the present Reporter being allowed to get something to eat but I am saying that it is wrong for any officer of this House or anybody in authority to give instructions that responsible employees of this House should be treated as if they were suppliants at the gate waiting for a meal, that when you are finished you will see if you have anything left over for the poor suppliants to have. This is what I am against. It is undemocratic, it is unconstitutional and it is contrary to the Standing Orders. That is what I am saying.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I, acting as Speaker, was informed about the matter just as I was about to take the Chair. Just as I brought it to the Speaker's attention, I was very glad to hear that the matter would be investigated because I also do not agree that matters like this should take place. If they are reporters and they are doing their duty they should also be fed just as Members of the House.

We have already lost seven minutes of Question Time and I have decided that Question Time is the Business now before the House. 3.05 p.m.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Question No. 134 which stands in the name of the hon. Member for St. Joseph.

QUESTION RE THE PERSONS PLACED IN EMPLOYMENT

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker,

To enquire of the appropriate Minister: Would the Minister state (1) the number of persons in the age groups 16 — 21 years, 21 years and over who are listed on the register with the Labour Exchange during the period of June 1972 to September 1972 as being unemployed; (2) the number of persons placed in employment during the relevant period; (3) the percentage of employable population which is now unemployed; (4) that steps are being taken by the Government to increase the employment possibilities in the country?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Spealier, the Reply is as follows (1) The number of persons in the age group 16 to 21 years listed on the Register of the Employment Exchange during the period June 1972 to September 1972 was 245; persons 21 years and over listed as employed for the same period was 329, (2) The number of persons placed in employment during the period June 1972 to September 1972 was 564. (3) Information from the last census indicates that unemployed persons represented 8.7% of the labour force. The Government is continuing expansion and development of the productive sectors of the economy with special emphasis on labour intensive activities.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Would the Minister tell us how many persons were left on the Register after the placing of the number of persons in employment during the relevant period?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not in a position to answer this but I will give the hon. Member as much information as I have. The working population is as follows

Male 50, 499

Unemployed 3, 679

Total labour force 54, 178

Female 31, 906

Unemployed 4, 134

Total labour force 36, 040

Total working population 82, 405

Unemployed 7, 813

Total labour force 90, 218

That information is for the benefit of the hon. Member.

Mr. ADAMS:

Is the Minister aware that over 100, 000 persons are registered on the books of the National Insurance Board as persons employable, and will he explain the discrepancy in relation to these figures?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

One of the problems that you have when you get questions from the other side is the simplicity of those questions, The hon. Member for St. Joseph asked about the employable population. This is a question for sociologists because who is employable and unemployable is not a question of fact but a question of disposition, therefore when the Minister gave the Reply he had to give it in relation to the

persons who wished to be employed, that is, the population of working age as against those who are actually employed. When the Member for St. Thomas asked about the numbers on the books of the National Insurance Board, that includes persons who are self employed as well.

Mr. ADAMS:

On a point of order, the Prime Minister is misrepresenting what I have said. I have not said anything about the self employed persons because the most recent report of the National Insurance Board refers to a time before self employed persons were registered, and that is why I used precisely those figures. It is the last year that the self employed persons remained unregistered. I am fully aware of what he is saying, and I have taken every conceivable step to avoid the confusion which he is seeking to introduce.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

What year was that? He said it was the last year, let him be specific about the year.

Mr. ADAMS:

One last supplementary. Will the Minister state if the Government is satisfied, in the light of the fact that it admits to over 7, 000 unemployed persons, with the performance of the Labour Exchange?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

It is not a question of the performance of the Labour Exchange, the Labour Exchange has not been given a mandate to go into the highways and hedges and preach the gospel to all mankind of registration, it is for the person who is unemployed to go in and register and say he wishes to be employed. It may be that people have become disenchanted because of the whole structure of the Labour Exchange and they do not worry to go, but there is also the problem of those people who are not employed and are not seriously looking for work, say the figure of 346 or whatever it may be, but this does not reflect a sort of recruitment campaign on the part of the Labour Department, it is the reluctance of the people who may be looking for jobs to go and register. 3.15 p.m.

QUESTION RE THE NUMBER OF PERSONS REGISTERED IN EACH CONSTITUENCY

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Parliamentary Question No. 143 stands in the name of the hon. Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question reads as follows-

To enquire of the appropriate Minister: Would the Minister state the number of persons at present registered to vote in each Constituency?

An Oral Reply was requested to this question but I wonder if the Minister would be prepared to lay it rather than give an Oral Reply.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to lay the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 143 asked by the hon. Member for the City of Bridgetown.

QUESTION RE THE REMOVAL OF DUTY AND TAXES ON FERTILISERS ETC

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Parliamentary Question No. 147 stands in the name of the hon. Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question reads as follows —

To enquire of the appropriate Minister: In view of the current and future food shortages which are likely to occur throughout the Caribbean area during the next year and the need to increase our agriculture production, would the Minister consider the removal of all duty and other taxes now levied on fertilisers, grass and weed killer chemicals and pesticides for agricultural use?.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Reply is as follows-

"Barbados as a signatory to the Treaty establishing the Caribbean Community and Common Market cannot unilaterally remove duties in the tariff. However, all unmixed fertilizers of the types used in agriculture are already imported into the island free of customs duty with the exception of nitrogenous fertilizers. Fortunately these nitrogenous fertilizers can be obtained from Trinidad, and if they are imported from this source they are admissible free of duty.

With regard to herbicides and pesticides, the Cabinet has already approved a number of chemicals to be imported free of duty for use as remedies for diseases of plants and for combating insect attacks on plants. Such chemicals include Agricide 20, Reger 40, Aldrin, Endrin and Dieldrin."

Mr. BOLDEN:

Is the Minister aware that some of the nitrogenous fertilisers which are currently in use are not available from the CARIFTA source and therefore duty is imposed?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

If the hon. Member would specify the ones, we could possibly look into this again, but our investigation has disclosed that these nitrogenous fertilisers are made in Trinidad and come in duty free.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The time allotted to Question Time has now expired, and unless someone moves a motion that Question Time be extended, we will have to stop at this point.

Mr. ADAMS? Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Question Time be now extended for 15 minutes. If I may say so, it would be extended for fifteen minutes at the expense of Private Members' Business, and I think that hon. Members would readily accept that it can reasonably be so moved. Unfortunately I was not here a moment or two earlier having been challenged as to what year a certain report was and I said it was 1970, and I thought it wise to go and bring the report to the House because I know the Prime Minister was not here when it was debated.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The motion before the House.....

Mr. ADAMS:

Sir, I am just stating that the year is 1970 and the number of insured persons, excluding self-employed, is 103, 000. I just want to get it on the record.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

I beg to second the motion that Question Time be now extended for fifteen minutes.

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

RESUMPTION OF QUESTION NO, 147

Mr. BOLDEN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Minister aware that certain chemical pesticides, because they bear unusual names, carry a levy and a tax on them?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

The pesticides to which the hon. Member refers do not bear taxes because they have unusual names. Taxes are imposed on the basis of the country of origin, and if they come from CARIFTA sources, there is a local tariff, but if they come from outside, the tariff there is, whether they come from a preferential area such as the United Kingdom or non-preferential such as West Germany — you do not tax names, you tax sources.

QUESTION RE THE DISREPAIR OF ROADS IN MELROSE, ST. THOMAS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER; Parliamentary Question No. 162 stands in the name of the hon. Member for St. Thomas.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Question reads as follows

To enquire of the Minister of MC.W.; Is the Minister aware that the roads in Melrose, St. Thomas are falling into disrepair and will He take steps to have road repairs undertaken at the earliest opportunity?

Hon. F. G. SMTTH:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reply is as follows

The Waterworks Department has recently installed a water main in the Melrosc area and it is anticipated that re-instatement of the road will be undertaken shortly.

**QUESTION RE THE INSTALLATION OF STREET LIGHTING AND WATER SUPPLY AT
FORTRESS HILL ST. THOMAS**

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Parliamentary Question No. 164 stands in the name of the hon. Member for St. Thomas.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Question reads as follows

To enquire of the Minister of M.C.W.: Will the Government take steps to install (a) Street Lighting;
(b) a water supply in Fortress Hill, St. Thomas?

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reply is as follows

The provision of street lighting and a water supply in Fortress Hill, St. Thomas will be considered when the Ministry's programmes for the year 1974/75 are being drawn up.

QUESTION RE THE DISREPAIR OF ROADS IN CANEFIELD TENAN TRIES, St. THOMAS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Parliamentary Question No. 166 stands in the name of the hon. Member for St. Thomas.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Question reads as follows

To enquire of the Minister of M.C. W.: Is the Minister aware that the private roads leading to and going through the two Canefield Tenantries in St. Thomas are in a very bad state of disrepair and will he enter into negotiations with the several owners and provide a proper road system for the residents?

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reply is as follows

The roads are privately owned and are not maintained by Government. However consideration will be given to the reconstruction of these roads when the 1974-75 Private Tenantry Roads Programme is being drawn up.

Mr. ADAMS:

Is the Minister aware that Canefield Tenantries, St. Thomas, have a very substantial population and there have been recent works by private owners which have made it more difficult of access than at any time perhaps in the three hundred years of the tenantries' history, and will the Minister give priority consideration in his negotiations with private owners to the reinstatement of these roads?

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

There are so many questions. The Minister is unable to answer the first part because I am not so aware. As to the second part, the matter will be investigated and if it merits priority, priority will be

given.

QUESTION RE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Question No. 170 stands in the name of the hon. Member for St. Thomas.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question reads as follows-

To enquire of the appropriate Minister: Will the Minister investigate the introduction of Daylight Saving Time as a means of combating the energy shortage?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Reply is as follows-

"The question of the introduction of Daylight Saving Time in connection with the current energy shortage has been under examination by the Government from the commencement of the energy crisis, and is continuing to be examined."

Mr. ADAMS:

Does the Minister undertake that the report of the Government's examination will be available before the end of the energy shortage?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

If the hon. Member wants an interim report, I am probably in a position to give him more information, but if he is asking for a final report as such, I am afraid I cannot give it. 3.25 p.m.

Mr. ADAMS; Will the Minister give an interim report on the progress of the Government's thinking?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Sir, for the general information of the House, I can say that the advice which the Senior Meteorologist has given is that the times of sunrise between now and next October are as follows, and that it is still dark 20 minutes thereafter

Sunrise

December, 1973 6.12 a.m.

January, 1974 6.27 a.m.

February, 1974 6.17 to 6.26 a.m.

March, 1974 6.00 a.m.

April, 1974 to October 5.32 to 5.50 a.m.

Sir, if you increase the time no savings will be effected. On mornings if you get up at six o'clock, you will have to wait about twenty minutes before the sun comes up. If you rise at six o'clock you will have to use light for twenty minutes and no energy will be saved. Although the investigation will continue, Sir, I do not see much hope for this question.

Mr. ADAMS:

Sir, has the Government obtained any advice on how many people rise at six and how many rise at seven, and on the other hand, how many people go to bed at six and go to bed at seven? I do not want to go into all of the implications. Is the Government aware that nearly everybody in Barbados is awake at seven o'clock in the evening, but many people in Barbados remain in bed after six?

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

That is a matter of opinion,

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

There are no further Replies. That brings us to the end of Question Time.

Mr. BOLDEN:

Sir, is it the end of Question Time, of the end of Questions? There are two other Questions to be answered.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

There are no more Questions. I have been reliably informed that the Minister is not ready with the answers to those two questions. It is now the time for doing Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask the leave of the House, on my own behalf and on behalf of the hon. Member for St. James, to give notice of two Resolutions.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Leader of the Opposition is asking the leave of the House to give notice of two Resolutions.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

There is no objection, Sir.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Mr. ADAMS:

Sir, I am obliged to the Leader of the House. The Resolution reads as follows

RESOLUTION RE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MINISTRY OF FOOD

"WHEREAS the cost of living in this Island is increasing by unprecedented steps;

AND WHEREAS the Government has failed to introduce any number of measures to reduce the same;

BE IT RESOLVED that this House deplores the failure of the Government to introduce such measures as are necessary to relieve the public of the burden of this intolerable increase, and calls upon the Government forthwith to establish a Ministry of Food charged with the duty of co-ordinating all aspects of production, distribution and importing of food and essential supplies."

Mr. CRAIG:

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

RESOLUTION RE THE ECONOMICS OF THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

"BE IT RESOLVED that this House calls upon the Government to appoint forthwith a National Committee to enquire into the Economics of the tourist industry in Barbados; its contribution to the economy; its profitability; the wage levels existing therein, and its future development."

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

These two Resolutions will be put on the Order Paper for the next Sitting of the House. You may now proceed with Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 1 be the first Order under Private Members' Business.

Mr. CRAIG:

I beg to second that.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Order No. 1 is the instant Order of the Day under Private Members' Business. It is to resume consideration of a Bill to amend the law relating to the age of majority, to persons who have not attained the age and to the time when a particular age is attained, and for connected purposes.

THE MINORS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1974

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair, and the House go into Committee to resume consideration of a Bill to amend the law relating to the age of majority, to persons who have not attained the age and to the time when a particular age is attained, and for connected purposes,

Mr. CRAIG:

I beg to second that.

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

Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 inclusive were called and passed. 3.35 p.m.

Clause 5 was called.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

Mr. Chairman, Clause 5 repeals Pan 3 of the Infants Act, 1958 and Section 43 of the Offences against the Person Act, 1868 which deals with the fraudulent abduction of women and girls under age. In so far as the rest of the amending legislation which we are now considering is concerned there is nothing really obnoxious or objectionable but when we come to Clause 5 we are dealing with a civil right particularly affecting a girl under 18 to enter into a marriage settlement, and also the removal of criminal liability. In other words you are repealing a criminal statute by what purports to be a civil remedy.

I have no knowledge that this matter was sent to the Law Society or the Chief Justice or the Law Revision experts or any of the experts who deal with these matters. What the Member is doing is seeking with a stroke of the pen to remove certain offences from the Statute Book of Barbados.

This has something to do with the Criminal Code of Barbados which needs revising. The very first law, that which deals with forcible and clandestine entries into lands is anachronistic. If you are doing law revision I do not think it is good to repeal this Act in this way. I think that the hon. Member for St. Thomas should have got the point up to now. I do not know if there was any case of abduction in his constituency. The last case I know about concerned the former Leader of the Opposition in Guyana and not the Leader of the Opposition of Barbados. That is the last case of abduction I remember being tried in the Law Courts of this Island. I do not know if the present Leader of the Opposition in Barbados feels that he might come under the ambit of this particular offence.

I would suggest, Sir, that Section 5 of the Bill be deleted because I do not see its relevance. As far as Section 5 is concerned it seeks to repeal Part 3 of the Infants Act of 1958 which confers a civil right on a male of 20 years and over or a female over 17 years to enter into marriage settlements. It is true that we do not often get that in Barbados but it is a civil right, and in the case of a female, it is the age of 17. If it was the age of 18 it would not be so bad, but you are lowering the age for males and raising it for females, and therefore you are making their position worse.

I suggest to the hon. Member that we delete Clause 5 altogether because it is repugnant to the best principles of the legislative process that you should not amend statutes or repeal them by something

which confers civil rights or seeks to confer civil rights upon citizens of the country. We should not remove the obligation to conform with the laws of the society under the guise of conferring civil rights upon others.

Mr. ADAMS:

Sir, undoubtedly Clause 5 of my Bill contains matters of opinion, two matters of opinion which have been somewhat confusingly stated in the speech of the Member who has just sat down. Firstly, whether you wish to preserve a specific right for a 17 year old girl to make a marriage settlement, and secondly whether you wish to preserve the anachronism which predates the Married Women's Property Act in England up to 1884 and in Barbados 1898.

As regards the second, about which the Prime Minister has passed perhaps the more severe strictures, my opinion is more strongly held as regards the first, it is a matter for the House. To deal with the first which, relates to girls of 17 years the present law is that you reach the age of majority at 21, but you can make a marriage settlement at 17 if you are a girl and at 20 if you are a man. That has existed in many Commonwealth countries and it has existed in Britain. 3.45 p.m.

When the Minors' Act was passed in Britain, as a matter of policy, it was decided that there should only be one age for the attaining of majority, which was 18, and all the special exemptions which have been given and of which this is the principal one, to persons under 18 to deal with property, would be abolished. In Barbados the only special exemption which a fairly complete perusal of the Laws of Barbados by myself and other persons have been able to discover is this one which allows a girl of 17 to settle her property upon marriage. As a matter of policy, I felt that uniformity in the age of majority was more desirable than preserving a civil right for 17 year old girls, which as far as I know, has never been exercised — I have never heard of it being exercised since 1958 nor have I been able to find any Attorney-at-law who has ever drawn a marriage settlement for a 17 year old girl, and in the light of my researches that this is a power which has never been exercised, and in the interest of uniformity, I suggested in my Bill and I suggest to the House that 18 remains the uniform age and Part 3 of the Infants' Act be repealed. However, I put the arguments and hon. Members have heard them, and they can decide whether 5A is worth keeping, or not. whether it is worth preserving that fairly modern right, — it is not an old right by any means.

As far as the other matter is concerned, the Prime Minister is perfectly right on the points of principle which are that you should not sneak into civil Bills of this sort to deal with civil status, the abolition of crimes. I tend to believe that contrary to former practice and practice as I see still prevails to an amazing extent in the United States Congress, a Bill should keep itself within its purposes and not go outside those purposes. The famous story is given of the Town Clerk of Blackpool in England who was asked to promote in the old days before 1857, when divorce existed, a Bill regulating the Local Government of the City of Blackpool, and he inserted as Clause 132 a paragraph "the Marriage of the Town Clerk is hereby dissolved." — I have the authority — and upon the Bill passed in the House of Commons and the House of Lords the Town Clerk of Blackpool obtained a divorce without all the immense expense in those days of petitioning the House of Lords and prosecuting an adulterer for criminal conversation, and what else. Well, that obviously is an extreme example of what the Prime Minister was fulminating against.

I submit to the House and I suggest that a repeal of Section 43 of the Offences against the Person Act

is at the other extreme, because Section 43 of the Offences against the Person Act goes back to the days when a married woman's property became her husband's upon marriage, It must be remembered that in 1868 when the Offences against the Person Act was passed, when you married a woman, everything she had became yours, and therefore it was thought necessary to protect women up to the age of 21 against any person or persons who married them for their money, not in the modern sense, but who married them literally for their money because the money would become theirs at the time of marriage. And Section 43 speaks of heiresses — persons who have real and personal estates, and co-heiresses. It is also in my submission against modern democratic principles to give a greater protection to the rich in the criminal law than to the poor. This is one of the very few statutes which do so. You can carry away a poor girl from her father without breach of the law but you cannot carry away a girl who is an heiress within the meaning of the Act.

Now if the Prime Minister was saying that you should amend Section 43 so as to make it a more general offence so that poor girls get the same protection as the rich, I would not mind, but he is saying that you should preserve Section 43 at all costs. I do not think he read it, because possibly I have the only copy in the House in my hands....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

My contention is not that section 43 is worthy of preservation at all costs or for all time. I am merely saying that it is a criminal statute and should be dealt with when we are dealing with the revision of the penal code of this Island when we can pay proper attention to it. It is accepted that in principle it is bad to do it this way. That is all I am saying, I am not going into the merits or demerits of heiresses and whether they could be abducted or seduced, or anything else. Otherwise I have no objection to the Bill. I am therefore moving, if he is finished, Sir, that Section 5 be deleted,

Mr. ADAMS:

I have heard the interruption, Sir. Again, it is a matter for the House. Section 43 of the Offences against the Person Act gives the protection of the criminal law to rich girls under the age of 21. If the House wants to leave that anachronism on our Statute Book — when the rest of the law was brought up to date before the Prime Minister was born, before indeed my own father was born, — if the House wishes to leave it in that condition, well the House will vote along those lines. But there is one point I will make about the infants, Sir. Part 3 of the Infants' Act will need some amendment, and I will ask the House to bear that in mind when they vote, because Part 3 extends a protection to infant settlements, but it only protects boys of the age of 20 and girls of the age of 17 up, so if by any chance the House decides to preserve the rights of girls of the age of 17, it would still have to amend Section 24 of the Infants' Act, because by implication the greater part of Part 3 of the Infants' Act is going to be made redundant by this Bill which we are passing now, the principle of which is already accepted, and the main Clauses have been already passed. But there would still have to be some amendment if it is desired to preserve the right of the 17 year old girl. If it is desired to preserve that right, then you will have to amend the original Act. It has not been preserved anywhere else that I know of, Sir. This part has been struck out of the law in every country where the age of majority has been reduced to 18. In Jamaica, in England, in New Zealand, I believe in every country; but we have heard strictures today, and the danger is following other countries, Sir.

I still beg to move, Sir, that the Clause 5 stand part; but I wonder if it is possible to put in two sub-clauses. (ASIDES) With great respect, Sir, on a point of order; those who want to delete Clause 5 only

have to vote against it. What I would respectfully submit is that — I would ask if those who wish to delete it would move a motion to delete each of the two parts separately so that Members of the House may have an opportunity of voting on each aspect of it. But if the Prime Minister who originally raised the objections could move a motion to delete Clause 5A and then Clause 5B, that would be good.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

The structural problem could be circumvented with a great deal of facility on this side. I do not know about those on that side. We can delete five and then we can come back to 24 and substitute the word 'eighteen' for 'twenty', and that is the end of the matter. Put in a new Clause 5. 3.55 p.m.

My motion now is that the words of Clause 5 proposed to be deleted stand part.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Chairman, there seems to be some doubt, so may I respectfully suggest that those who wish to oppose the two principles embraced in Clause 5 (a) and (b) move an amendment rather than vote against it to the effect that you delete the words "shall apply to any male infant under the age of 20 years or" because we will then have the issue clearly before the House.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

On a point of order, I would like to explain to the hon. Member that the words there are explanatory words so you cannot amend those, they are merely illustrating what you are repealing. There is a motion before the House that the words of Clause 5 proposed to be deleted, stand part.

Mr. CHAIRMAN:

I am about to put the motion.

The Question that the words of Clause 5 proposed to be deleted stand part was put and resolved in the negative, the House dividing as follows:

NOES:

Hon. C. E. TALMA, Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, Hon. A. MORRISON, Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE, Hon. F. G. SMITH, Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, Mrs. G. L. EASTMOND, Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, and Hon. P. G. MORGAN- 9.

AYES:

Mr. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY and Mr. L. S. CRAIG - 3.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

If I may suggest an amendment, I will give reasons why I am not in favour of a common age for both males and females. We have now consented that at the age of 18, people may enter into marriage contracts, whereas before, it was the age of 10. The lawful age for marriage is over the age of 16, and I believe that is why the age of 17 was used for a woman because the female is invariably younger than the male upon entering into a contractual arrangement of marriage. If you put the age of the female up to

18 it means that if an 18 year old adult wants to marry a 17 year old girl, which he can legally do, she cannot enter into a marriage contract. I do not have to labour the point, the amendment which I am proposing is that section 24 of the Infants' Act of 1958 be amended by deleting the word "twenty" and substituting the word "nineteen" therefor. It reads, "nothing in this part of the Act shall apply to any male infant under the age of 20 years", so they will now have to be under the age of nineteen because you are now making them capable of entering into contracts at eighteen. If you make it under the age of eighteen that will mean seventeen, try and figure that out. 4.05 p.m.

Mr. ADAMS:

Sir, having failed to get the original Clause 5, I observed that here on my left, waiting to spring up but not being able to spring up as quickly as the Prime Minister, these words were being written down Section 24 of the Infants' Act 1958-5 is hereby amended by deleting the word "twenty", and as my colleague the hon. Member for Bridgetown was writing, the Prime Minister beat him to the gun. So clearly we on this side are not disagreeing with the principle, but there is just something to understand. There are certain remarks I do not want to go unchallenged because I feel strongly about the age of marriage and I have introduced in this House an Age of Marriage Bill as well. The age of marriage in Barbados is not sixteen; it is twelve for a girl and it is fourteen for a boy; and girls still will be able to marry at twelve because of various things that I don't want to go into at length in here, but all relate to the tardiness of Government Departments and so on. Girls can still get married in Barbados at the age of twelve, and I believe the Registrar's report for last year showed that there were certain married women under the age of sixteen with children walking around in Barbados. School girls can still lawfully marry in this country, let us not forget it, and all we have done is to keep a privilege for seventeen year old married women where those who are twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and sixteen would not have it. Still, if that is the will of the House, so let it be. Even when the age of marriage is raised to sixteen, the logicians will ask, why should a seventeen year old married woman have a privilege that a sixteen year old married woman cannot have? I can say a great deal about hasty legislation. The original Bill was carefully thought out, but I seem to see that it is being amended with rather less thought, but nonetheless I am so glad to be able to get the age of majority reduced to eighteen in Barbados that I would consent to any amendment that would make this a part of the general law.

I think it is time the young people of Barbados who can vote at eighteen, who are men at eighteen biologically, physically and socially be also so legally; so I would consent to any amendment just to get that principle through.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW. I should just like to say that with all due respect to my colleague on the other side that I think it would be more correct to bring both to seventeen. I have been looking at it and the ability of an infant or minor to make contracts for his benefit was stated in the Act not to apply to a male under the age of twenty, that is, that from twenty up you could; so you have reduced it, and it would be correct now to put both the male and the female at seventeen. I added on one year, I should deduct a year. If the legal age was twenty-one before and you said it should not apply to anybody under the age of twenty, therefore if you reduce it to eighteen it should not apply to either male or female under the age of seventeen, and this would give the equality which is so avidly sought by the hon. Member for St. Thomas. I stand corrected on that part of it.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

The new section would read "Section 24 of the Infants' Act, 1958 is hereby amended by deleting the

following words, "male infant under the age of twenty years or to any female", appearing in lines 3 and 4 thereof so that it would now read — "Nothing in this part of the Act contained shall apply to a minor under the age of seventeen years" - and the marginal note is amended to read "Act 1958—19, Section 24 amended".

I beg to move that the new Clause 5 stand part.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

I beg to second that.

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

Clause 6 was called and passed. The Schedule was called.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that this be the Schedule to the Bill, and in so moving, I would say that I have no particular feeling that this is necessarily the most complete Schedule that could be -drawn. I paid particular attention to a speech or a remark made by the hon. Member for St. Michael South Central some time ago that the Jamaican Bill took sixteen different clauses. However there are certain matters that cannot be handled as I conceive it in an Act of this sort, and the most notable of them must surely be the age of membership of the House of Assembly. It is a matter of the Constitution that you must be 21 years old to be a Member of the House of Assembly, and I did not feel free to seek to amend the Constitution in the course of the Minors Act.

There are also perhaps one or two other matters. Some persons may feel that the age of jurors should be reduced to eighteen; other persons may feel it should be raised to 25. All these are matters of principle. I can only take it that hon. Members accept or are at one with me on the principles embodied in the amendments which I have included in the Schedule. The Schedule deals with the main things; it deals with the Trade Union and so on, and I trust that the House will accept that these are matters commonly included in schedules in Acts of this sort, and I imagine the legal draftsmen have investigated it and pronounced favourably upon these several Acts. In any case, and I say this for the benefit of the Prime Minister, there is a general clause and the Schedule is included to make assurance doubly sure.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Mr. J. M G. M. ADAMS, seconded by Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill with amendments in Committee. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill as amended be now read a third time.

I do not intend to detain the House for long with a speech, but it is some time now since this Bill was

given a Second Reading and I should like to remind hon. Members that the House first adverted to this matter in December 1971, when it supported my Resolution in favour of reducing the age of majority in Barbados from 21 years to 18. It gave the Bill a Second Reading on the 15th August, 1972. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee which was unable to report within the time prescribed by the Standing Orders and the Bill therefore was referred to the Committee of the whole House for consideration of the whole House. 4.15 p.m.

In many ways I would like to say that I am glad that it has had the consideration of the whole House in Committee, because all of those Members who might be interested in a subject as far-reaching as this one has had it drawn to their attention and has been able to attend, if they so wish, and make a contribution. I do not think we would have had a contribution from the Prime Minister if the Bill had been passed by the Select Committee.

I am very glad to be able to say that the whole House has supported me even after more than two years, since the principle was originally accepted, and I look forward to the early passage of this Bill by the Other Place and its transition into law. I know that all Attorneys-at-law will be following its progress with some interest, and I believe that all young persons will also do so in the fullness of time.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

I beg to second that.

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

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill do now pass and be cited as... Sir, I am very sorry to say that at this late stage a necessary amendment is discovered. As I was about to ask the citation — the citation, unfortunately, reads in the printed copy "The Minors Act, 1972", Sir, and this has escaped into the Laws of Barbados from time to time, for example, the Trade Union Act, I believe; the Trade Union Act, 1963, which is the Trade Union Act, 1964(3) or something like that, I can only ask that the House amend it even at this stage, Sir. I am asking that the Third Reading of the Bill be recommitted. I cannot do it any other way, Sir. It has had a Third Reading. The Bill should have read the Minors Act, 1974, and as we have passed it, it reads the Minors Act, 1972.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

On a point of order, Sir. I do not think it is necessary to recommit it, because you have not cited the Act as yet. It is a Bill up to now. It could have been the Bill of 1354, but it is now the Minors Act, 1974. There is a difference between an Act and a Bill. What the Clerk of Parliament finally records here as the citation, is the citation.

Mr. ADAMS:

It was printed 1972, Sir, and that is what I was worried about.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

The citation is the Minors Act, 1974, Sir. When it goes to the Other Place and they deal with it as a Bill, they will just make the deletion and they do not have to send it back here.

Mr. ADAMS:

Sir, I am obliged for the Prime Minister's experience. I beg to move that this Bill do now pass and be cited as the Minors Act, 1974.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

I beg to second that,

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

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 2 be the next Order of the Day under Private Members' Business,

Mr. MOTTLEY:

I beg to second that.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Order No. 2 is the instant Order of the Day, and it is to resume consideration of a Bill to amend the Affiliation Proceedings Act, 1963 (1963-29).

AFFILIATION PROCEEDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1974

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee to resume consideration of a Bill to amend the Affiliation Proceedings Act, 1963 (1963-29).

Mr. MOTTLEY:

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. LOWE took the Chair.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

Mr. Chairman, the date should be changed.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 1 be recommitted.

Mr. HINDS:

I beg to second that.

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

Clause 1 was recommitted.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 1 be amended by deleting the figures "1972" and the figures "1974" substituted therefor.

Mr. HINDS:

I beg to second that.

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

The Question that Clause 1, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 4.25 p.m.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you do now report the passing of one Bill in Committee as amended.

Mr CRAIG:

I beg to second that.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

I want to draw to the attention of the Committee that this matter was considered in Select Committee on one or two occasions, I happened to be a Member of the Committee which sat on the Affiliation Bill and it was agreed that these amendments, good as they are, and helpful as they will be, do not really do a complete job so to speak. It was felt that a general examination should be conducted by the Attorney General's Department into this matter. This was an agreement, and to my surprise the Opposition is still carrying through with this.

As far as I am aware, I have not got any report from the Crown Law Officers, but if you pass this now, it may well mean that a comprehensive Bill will come down to replace this Act. This Bill can serve a useful purpose in the interim, but it does not contain the comprehensive legislation affecting the whole Act which is the kind of piece meal legislation on which the Opposition usually attacks the Government and now it is guilty of such behaviour.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I will heed the words of the Leader of the House, but I accept full responsibility for introducing into Parliament a Bill which amends the Affiliation Proceedings Act of 1963, whereby the mother of an illegitimate child will receive instead of \$5.00 a week a sum not in excess of \$10.00 a week.

I do not have to elaborate on the fact that the cost of living has gone up by 48 per cent. I think that Members would appreciate that there is need after 10 years to have this legislation amended so that the young children of this country — although we still have a distinction between illegitimate and legitimate

children and I still hope that the legislation which the Government will bring down will remove that distinction.

This Bill came before the House in 1972 and it merely seeks to give Magistrates the right where persons working for certain sums....

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW:

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to interrupt the hon. Member, but I think we have passed the Second Reading stage already. We have heard a Second Reading speech from the Leader of the House and another one from the Introducer of the Bill. Indeed I have heard a lot of Second Reading speeches,

Mr. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Chairman, I accept the rebuke of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, but I was only following the example of the Leader of the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY seconded by Mr. L. S. CRAIG the Bill was read a third time and passed. Its title was agreed to.

**RESOLUTION RE THE BROADCAST OF DEBATES OF THE HONOURABLE THE
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 11 under Private Members' Business be the next Order of the Day.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

I beg to second that.

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

Mr. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Resolution reads —

"Whereas there is need for a wide dissemination of political ideas;

And Whereas there is no proper coverage by the Media of Debates in the House of Assembly;

And Whereas there is a need to involve the people in the politics of the country at all levels;

Be it Resolved that the House appoint an all party Committee to make recommendations on the broadcast of Debates in the House of Assembly and Party Political Braodcasts in general."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that one of the reasons, why the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation was formed, was because the present Government felt when they were in the Opposition in the late 50s and early 60s that the then Government had denied them the right to use the sole broadcasting station at the time, Barbados Rediffusion Service Limited, for the purpose of party political broadcasts.

I remember hearing as a young boy many speeches in this House by the then Opposition, the present Government, as to why there should be a broadcast of debates of the House in order that there should be a full dissemination of political ideas. It seems that over the period of years, the present Government having won the elections, has drifted away from the principles which it then advocated, and adopted principles that are in complete contradiction to the views advocated by them when they were in the Opposition.

The present system of coverage in the Press leaves much to be desired. When this matter was raised some years ago about the broadcasting of debates, it was said that the main objection was that there was no limitation of speeches and that one speaker could speak at great length and utilise all the time available on the air. 4.35 p.m.

Since the last General Election, the Standing Orders of the House were amended and now that there is a limit placed on the time for which Members should speak, I believe that this problem needs a proper investigation and it is for this reason that I bring this Resolution which is asking for the establishment of an all-party Committee to make recommendations on the broadcast of debates in the House of Assembly and Party Political Broadcasts in general. At the moment we find that almost every single individual in this country except the Members of the Opposition, is allowed time to speak at the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and to appear on television. We find that whenever there is some dispute between the merchants and a Minister, the Minister is given the right to speak on television; he goes to the television and speaks and the merchant is also given the right to reply. If there is a dispute between the Union and any organization, the Union is given the opportunity to speak on the dispute over the television as happened in the last dispute between the Hoteliers and the Union. The television was used as a medium for broadcasting on that occasion and on almost every occasion when there is any dispute, but never is an opportunity allowed to Members of the Barbados Labour Party to state any principle or any policy on television. We find that when there is a dispute between the Minister and the Prices Control Commission, both are allowed time on television to explain their case, but no time is ever afforded to Members of the Opposition — except for the broadcast of the Budget — no time is allowed to Members of the Opposition to go on television to state their policy, and now that the country is facing crisis after crisis, we feel that the time is ripe when a party political broadcasting system should be instituted.

We, as an Opposition, will not be going on television to abuse anybody. We as an Opposition accept the role which an Opposition must play and we accept full responsibility as the Opposition, and we feel that with having 43% of the electorate voting for us, the electorate should be given the right to hear our views — the views of the Opposition — from time to time. We find that every now and again businessmen are given the opportunity to appear on television and discuss their problems. Almost every sectional interest in this country is given the right to go on television and discuss their views, except the Barbados Labour Party.

If the Government feels, or may be afraid, that some sort of slanderous statements may be made by us, provision could be made whereby the statements could be recorded, but I feel that the time has come when the masses in this country should be allowed the opportunity to hear the views and the policy of the Barbados Labour Party. What is happening in this country is that people are beginning to look at politicians as people completely removed from the masses in this country, and I feel that the only way that this view could be erased is by allowing the people the opportunity to know what is going on in Parliament. Very few people take the time, or have the interest, to come to Parliament to see what is going on. Some people do not know that they can visit Parliament. I feel that the attitude of involving the people only at elections, is far outmoded. Let us be realistic. If in this country, the Government feels that the Opposition is ineffective then let them institute party political broadcasts. Expose us to the public. If you feel that we are so incapable of putting on a good performance, then it would be in your interest to expose us to the public. But I challenge the Government — I well remember when I first returned from England, before I was a Member of this Chamber, talking to the past Leader of the House and telling him, "well, now that you are running the Government, I remember that you were preaching for many years that the Barbados Labour Party did not allow the debates to be broadcast, what are you going to do about it" and his answer was, "now that we are in power, we are going to do the same thing." And this is exactly what has happened, because if you check the Prime Minister's speeches when he was in Opposition, pressing the Barbados Labour Party as it was then constituted as the Government of this country, for the right to broadcast, you will find that some of the most severe attacks were made in this House of Assembly in such debates. Why is it then that when the Democratic Labour Party was in Opposition it.....

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

At the time, the hon. Member is referring to, I think I was a Member of the House for many years, Sir, but there was not a radio station as such. It was this Government that set up a radio station. Unless he is referring to Barbados Rediffusion Service Limited which did not belong to the Government.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

No, Sir. The point I am making is that the Opposition then was calling on the Government to make it possible through Rediffusion to broadcast debates and to have Party Political Broadcasts. That is what the Democratic Labour Party in those days preached; but once they won the Government, their whole attitude changed. And that was one of the reasons that led to the establishment of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. One of the reasons that led to it, was the failure of the Government, the Opposition in those days to be able to use Barbados Rediffusion Service Limited for the purposes of Party Political Broadcast and debates of the House. 4.45 p.m.

The idea was that with the establishment of a Government station, it would have afforded the Government the right to Party political broadcasts and to broadcast debates, but you find that they no longer accept this principle. The Member for St. Michael West is in a privileged position, because he does not speak as a Member of the Democratic Labour Party on television, he speaks as a General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union.

Mr. WALCOTT:

On a point of order, I do not know the last day I was on television, I have rejected television.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

As recent as last Friday night.

Mr. WALCOTT:

Only to explain a situation, and I was invited.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

This is even worse how because he is saying that CBC is adopting a partial attitude towards the House of Assembly and that only Members of the Government are invited to go on television and tell the nation several things.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I am sorry, but the time being 4.45 p.m., the time for Private Members' Business has now expired.

RESUMPTION OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

When the House was suspended at lunch time it was in Committee doing Government Business; to that it automatically reverts.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee on the Electrical Wiremen (Licensing) Bill, 1973. Mr. LOWE took the Chair.

RESUMPTION OF CONSIDERATION OF THE ELECTRICAL WIREMEN (LICENSING) BILL, 1974

The Schedule was called.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that section 1 subsection (1) (a) of the Schedule be amended by deleting the word "Chief" and substituting the word "Electrical" therefor.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

I beg to second that.

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

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that this Schedule as amended be the Schedule to this Bill.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Hon. F. G. SMITH, seconded by Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill with an amendment in Committee. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. F. G. SMITH, seconded by Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, the Bill as amended was read a third time and passed. Its title was agreed to.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the next Item with which the Government proposes to deal is a Bill to amend the Post Office Act, 1911 for which permission has been granted by His Honour the Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition is aware of this Bill also.

THE POST OFFICE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1974

Hon. F.G. SMITH:

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is part of a tidying up process of fees and other matters charged by the Post Office for services rendered to the country. It springs from the Prime Minister's Budget Speech of 1972 in which he indicated that the whole aspect of fees generally, some of which are very old and date back for a long time, would be revised and reconsidered. This Bill before the House today is just a part of a series of regulations and adjustments of fees based on the recommendations from the Universal Postal Union as well as the Tokyo Convention dealing with Post Office matters.

This particular Bill which the House has kindly given leave to be dealt with in all its stages today, and which I would like to get passed by both Houses of Parliament to become law before 1st February, is to adjust the figures of the various fees charged by the Post Office. The Post Office operates in such a way that some things are done by regulations and others by a Bill or Resolution. I think the Honourable the House of Assembly may have heard, but I should like to say at this point of time, that we are operating a Post Office system under an Act of 1911, which was even before carriage of mail by air was in existence. There have been amendments from time to time on this particular matter, but you can see that if you are operating a modern Post Office with modern international functions under an antiquated Act, naturally it cannot function as efficiently as one would desire, consequently the Government has brought down an expert who is in the process of drafting a new Post Office Act with new regulations and bringing it up to date, and this procedure has been followed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Jamaica and other territories. He is also drafting both Manuals and Guides for all aspects of the post Office for the benefit of the public and for the guidance of employees, and he is obviously using models with modifications to suit Barbados. 4.55 p.m.

In Barbados it is not a question of copying them, it is a question that postal arrangements are so universal and common, and the Post Office here works in such close contact with other postal administrations throughout the world from whom you get letters, that it is really not so much a question of copying but of following up-to-date procedures adopted in more up-to-date postal administrations.

The Bill as I said is just to amend the Post Office Act, 1911, to revise the rates charged for certain postal services, and this Act sets out in clear terms what these postal services are and need no special detailed mention. As a matter of fact, even with the rates here which have not gone up any great amount,

we are also looking at this survey by the expert and at the possibility that the time may very well come when the Post Office revenue will be less than the expenditure, and we are looking in this general review at a method of discovering what areas of each aspect of the postal administration is not paying its way; so that in future, we will be able to fix rates to suit that aspect of the postal service which is not paying its way, because we make very little surplus.

If you look at the Annexed Estimates of the Post Office, you can see that the Government does not run the Post Office as any big revenue-earning body of the Government — I think hon. Members will agree. It does not lose under me but it is not used to bring in revenue in this case. We are offering a service to the public, a very essential service, a service which the Minister responsible must at all times endeavour to see is efficient, honest and works as well as possible. What persons in Barbados do not understand is the great handicap a postal service like the Barbados Postal Service, works under. Where you are operating in a country, where there is no numbering of houses, it must affect the efficiency both of the sorting and the delivery of mail. If you say to a man "Here is a letter for John Brown, Government Hill.", he may have to walk up Government Hill ninety times. When he starts at the bottom he may ask a fellow who says that there is a John Brown by Howell's Cross Road, and when he gets to Howell's Cross Road, some one sends the fool further and further and eventually the letter may come back in and be stamped "Addressee Unknown." It is not the postman's fault; it is, that the present method of not having houses numbered affects the efficiency, and it affects it in sorting letters in the Post Office too. As a matter of fact, we have very great difficulty where the postman who is on a regular route goes on leave or becomes sick and we have to put a new postman on the route. It is even more difficult for him, because the old postman knows nearly everybody, whereas the new postman cannot find quite a few of the addresses.

I am endeavouring to name every street, but that is not the answer. With the help of the Jaycees, we have started the numbering of houses as a pilot project. We have started with Belleville not because it is my constituency, but because the houses are well laid out in roads and avenues, and depending on that, we will see how it goes. We are also asking the Chamber of Commerce to help with numbering business places in Bridgetown. You may know Cave Shepherd or one or two other stores, but there are shops in Bridgetown that should be numbered. If you go to any big city in any part of the world, you will find the shops in the main street still have numbers despite the fact that they are well known places like Macy's and Marks and Spencer. Two things we are aiming at very shortly and one is a very long and laborious exercise, the numbering of houses to facilitate more efficient sorting and delivery. I also find and I am correcting this now that I have an opportunity that I did say that we might have a new post office beginning early in the year. My technical experts tell me now that with the need to go to tender and the need to prepare tender documents for a project of this magnitude, April seems too close a date for the work to commence and they have given me a much further date in the year as a possible time for the commencement of the new post office. I regret I have to say so, but I like to tell the truth and correct any wrong impressions so that when people do not see something done in April as I said a week or two ago, I want them to know that it is not the desire not to start, but the fact that the technical details and the contract aspect of it and the tendering and detailed drawings are going to take a longer time than was anticipated. So they are not likely to start in April but much later in the year.

Anyhow, I do not think there is anything more to say. These rates are here and Members will see the need for them. I think hon. Members will know that in America they have turned over the post office to a corporation which is out to make a profit; it is no longer part and parcel of the federal administration.

We have no plans for that, but at the same time, we are not using the post office in Barbados as a money-earning part of Government, but we are just using it to see that the mail is delivered safely, efficiently and expeditiously.

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

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD:

I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since the hon. Member who has just sat down, and I, have ceased to clash in the House, I must say I find his speeches to be of an occasional obscurity and a general uniform lack of vividness that make me miss the grand old days. At the risk of re-opening the grand old day, I wish to characterise his entire speech so far today as an effort to conceal from the public the fact that the price of posting a letter is going to go up from 5 cents to 8 cents, because that is surely the main burden of the Bill which is before us.

Now, I did not even know there was a Bill before us. I had to ask the Deputy Clerk of Parliament, Mr. Connell who very kindly told me that he was persuaded that the Minister was indeed speaking on the Bill. Now this Act may be cited as the Post Office (Amendment) Act, 1974, and section 3 states that mail posted in Barbados for delivery in Barbados shall now cost eight cents for a letter not exceeding one ounce which at present cost five cents. This is a 60% increase in the cost of local letters and yet the Minister says that he is not out for making money for the Government. I very much hope that the Ministry's recent difficulties have not so far addled his brain as to make him believe that where the Post Office projected a profit last year of \$176, 000, year before last of \$455, 000 - and I do not know what these estimates are, but I gather from his speech that a profit is still projected — that a rise in the cost of posting letters is not intended to raise money for the Government. Why it shrieks out to high heaven that the Post Office, one of the few Departments of Government which did not lose money in the past is now to be used as a milch cow to pull the Government out of the financial difficulties which the mis-Government and mal-administration of the Democratic Labour Party put it into in 1972 and 1973; for what other reason if the Post Office is not losing money do you need to raise the price of posting letters 60%? The old price of 4 cents prevailed I think from 1953 to 1970, certainly for a very large number of years, and it was increased in a budget as an admitted way of raising money. Now we have an increase of three times the old amount and we have the Minister introducing it by saying that this is not intended to make money for the Government. But where do the Post Office profits go? They go into the Consolidated Fund to help pay the debts of Government which Government has incurred without having the real means or real expectations of being able to settle them in the ordinary way.

As I see it from reading the Bill, and reading the Regulations, every postal rate, which it is within the power of the Barbados Post Office to raise without obtaining international agreement, has been raised and I have no doubt that if the Minister cares to reveal this, he will tell us that negotiations are now underway with a view to raising airmail rates too, so that when you write your family in Britain or the United States it will cost you more. Pray to God that it does not cost 60% in the fullness of time, but at least international agreement will restrict that. 5.05p.m.

I am very worried also that the Minister should draw the analogy of the United States. He might even

better have drawn the analogy of Great Britain where the postal services have been handed over to the Corporation. In the United States, the Post Office has always lost money, but it has been very closely tied in with Federal politics to the extent that every elected M.P., and every elected Member of Congress used to have a nomination of so many postmen for his district, so many Postmasters and so on, and the element of political interference in the United States' Post Office had become so great that it had reached the stage where there was an almost invariable rule that the successful President's Campaign Manager was appointed Postmaster General no matter how unsuitable he was for that purpose. Eventually, the Federal Government and the people revolted and handed the Post Office over to an independent Corporation which would not be run exclusively by politicians of both parties as a milch cow for their canvassers. That has been a great change in the United States. The Post Office had been losing a great deal of money; the Federal revenue could no longer stand it, especially in the light of the very poor postal services which had been experienced in many parts of that country great in many respects, but not so great in postal matters. In other words, I do not wish to link the United States as an example for running the Barbados Post Office.

Sir, we have an area which is so limited that I suppose the great distance that you have to cover to get from one place in Barbados to another must be 30 miles. We have a Post Office with an extremely well-trained staff. There is no doubt that the system which was introduced as long ago as 1854 in Barbados when the first inland post had originated had served Barbadians well throughout the years. We have seen the quality of postal service deteriorate, but, even with the best will to my party in the world, I would not like to blame the present Minister of Communications and Works for that. It is deteriorating because the demands made upon it are greater than the amount of money available to pay for certain services. I will accept that.

In the 1930's every postman had a given walk, and had to be at a certain landmark on his walk at a certain time. He was given 10 minutes to walk from, say, Codrington corner to Bush Hall Yard Gap corner. He had to deliver all the letters within that time or answer the Inspector. In these days many more people live along Spooner's Hill, and he will not be able to keep to his schedule. I accept that all of these things have happened to the Post Office. Now, if the Minister says that he is increasing postal rates so as to pay more postmen; — to open the Post Office on Saturdays and satisfy the Barbados Workers' Union at the same time; to increase the number of postal deliveries a day in non—City districts that would be a different matter — if he said that, then we would be arguing on a different plane altogether, but he is telling us in the grandest possible terms that we are making certain adjustments. Newspapers are going up from 2 cents to 3 cents to deliver; letters are going up from 5 cents to 8 cents. He has not said that, but that is what is in the Bill. However, he has not offered us any improved service which can reasonably be asked for in the light of these increases.

Sir, I do not conceive that it is the duty of a Government to run a Post Office as a revenue—earning Department. I am at one with the Minister in that regard. I believe that a Post Office, as he says, should exist to provide a postal service to its people. Barbados is small, and a first-class postal service can easily be provided within our limited area. There is no difficulty in Barbados in obtaining postmen such as exists all over Europe and the United States. It is a respectable and respected profession, and I believe that there will be no shortage of persons willing to come forward to be trained to operate as letter-carriers. I can only assume that it is not intended to improve the service in any way.

I have not heard one word about what is undoubtedly a burning issue, namely, the fact that the Post

Office is only operating a 5—day week. Mr. Speaker, there are no circumstances in which any argument that I have ever heard could make me feel that a 5—day week will suit a postal service. There are no circumstances under which I can believe that. I say that you must pay people overtime, or employ a greater staff, have a work shift, or raise the scales to the point where such a system can be borne by the revenue and are acceptable by the workers. I am not proposing that we should go back to the day when the Post Office opened from 7.30 to 6, or from 7.30 to 5 even more recently, Sir. That was the position only a few years ago. I am not proposing a return to those days. I am proposing a staff which can handle the mails over the weekend; a staff which can open and provide a postal service on Saturdays.

I have said already in this House that Barbados is a place where every Post Office is run by the Government. All of the District Post Offices are run as part of the Post Office structure. You do not have a Postal Agency with a part-time Postmater or Postmistress who can give a postal service within certain hours at weekends, and where you can go and knock up the Postmaster, perhaps, on a Sunday and get him to take a letter. We do not have any of that in Barbados. We have a centralised and a bureaucratic form of Post Office administration. There are only a dozen or so Post Offices in Barbados. They have proved enough to meet the people's needs, because in the past they have been opened for a sufficient number of hours to satisfy all those who may resort to them. But we are accepting too readily in Barbados a shrinkage of service to the public and in other aspects.

I believe, Sir, that the Minister, when he was introducing this Bill in all its stages, should have been honest. This is a pre-Budget matter, and it is designed to take some of the weight off the Prime Minister when he delivers his Budget Speech in May or June later this year. I am surprised to find the Minister of Communications and Works so ready to introduce matters such as these whilst cloaking them under the phrase: "Certain adjustments have to be made." What kind of adjustment is it to raise the inland letter rate from 5 cents to 8 cents? Why did he not adjust some of the rates downwards? In the last general adjustment some of the rates were adjusted downwards. Let the Minister go and look back. The airmail rate to England was reduced. That is what I call an adjustment. Reduce one and carry up one.

Sir, the Post Office should be able, and I believe it is able — certainly under the Barbados Labour Party regime — to keep down costs and to meet expenses by increased volume. It was a Department which, I repeat, could not be attacked for inefficiency in the way many Government Departments are attacked. You have bad eggs in every box; rotten apples in every barrel, and I am not joining in any attack upon the Post Office upon the ground that from time to time a postman or a postal clerk is involved in something wicked. You will get that in every Department; you will get that in every field of life, and I do not believe that I should categorise the Department on that basis. But the Post Office is ill-served by measures such as this. As soon as you try to make the Post Office a milch cow of the Government and keep it as something that has to be used to provide revenue — no matter what the Minister says, it is clear that the immediate effect of these increases will be to provide revenue.

Sir, I am looking for travelling allowance increases for postmen, too. I appreciate that with the cost of gasoline going up, they should be given increases in their travelling allowance, but we have not heard one word about this from the Minister. All we have heard about is something regarding adjustments. Sir, when we begin to shilly-shally with Departments such as the Post Office and the Port Departments which earn revenue but which are not intended to be places of revenue for the Government, then you do not know where you will end. 5.15 p.m.

The Postal Service collapsed in Germany to the extent that you could not get Germans to work as postmen at all. They had to import postmen, who could not even speak the language, from Turkey and other parts of South Eastern Europe. The postal services in the USA have reached the stage where letters take three and four days to deliver. In Britain, same day delivery is a thing of the past, I am told, except for delivery between big cities and the handling of airmail correspondence.

We have to beware lest these things happen in Barbados, and I appeal to the Minister to meet the House fairly and 'squarely in his reply. I believe that his manner of presentation, and indeed much of what is in the Bill, has been dictated by the economic circumstances of the Government.

I would be a madman to think that the Minister is going to get up and so speak against his party as to admit it. Nevertheless I am saying so, and I know that honourable Members in their hearts accept that something of the sort must be true.

I want the Minister to give the House the assurance that he will not preside over the Post Office like other Departments less favoured and headed by perhaps less efficient administrators, from the top going down and losing the Government's money, and that the Post Office is not going to be used to try to earn more money for the Government.

The Minister said that the next Estimates will show what revenue is anticipated. I expect the Minister in his Reply to tell the House freely and honestly what revenue is being projected both on the basis of the old rates and of the new. If he has that information available for the forthcoming financial year, I expect the Minister to tell the House what increase is anticipated in the revenue from the 60 per cent increase in the carriage cost of local letters, and also to tell the House to what extent expenses will be increased in this financial year up to the end of March, 1974 and in the forthcoming financial year 1974-75.

I know that this Minister is fully capable of mastering his brief, even if he presents it sometimes in a slightly mischievous way; and I hope that if he has mastered it sufficiently to introduce it in so bland and obscure a manner, he has also mastered it to give us the real facts once he knows that Members have been alerted to the true story and the picture behind the speech that he has made.

Mr. WALCOTT:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Post Office has from time to time been coming in for criticism. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition and his party have been at pains at some times even to criticise Postmen. I believe that a losing party sometimes looks for scape goats, and the Postmen might have been one.

The Post Office is not something new. When the Barbados Labour Party was in power, I do not think that they had anything to their credit where the Post Office was concerned. They went out of power. Maybe they are like the boy who failed his examination and when they asked him why he failed he said that just as he was about to pass they stopped work.

Of course postal rates will go up. They go up from time to time. There are a number of factors which cause it. Only a fool cannot see what is happening in the world today. From the first of this month airlines have increased their rates. We cannot at all times dictate to the airlines about the cost of freight. These are factors that you have to take into consideration.

Then, there are methods of arriving at the rates for carriage of mail. Look at a letter that you receive from the U.S.A. and you get an idea in the terms of International Exchange. You will see that airmail from the U.S.A. is 17 cents for a half ounce letter and from Barbados to the U.S.A. is 25 cents or about 17½ cents in U.S. currency. Each post office has to deal with certain factors for its own budgetary purposes.

There has been a lot of talk going on about the five day week. I want to say here and now that some of the Members of the Opposition have no idea that the workers of this country are not going to stand for any nonsense about hours of work.

We have not seen any Resolution in this House criticising any of the banks in Barbados for having a five day week. When the banks wanted a five day week, it was accepted. On what basis are you going to argue? In some countries banks open on Saturdays too. In some places Post Offices close on Saturdays; but there is this idiotic behaviour in Barbados when you close the Post Office on Saturday. There is the feeling that life completely comes to an end. That could only be the feeling of a crass idiot.

So far as the Union is concerned, you can open any day. You can open on Sundays and public holidays, but we cannot deal with people who do not know anything about hours of work. What is the point that you are making about the Post Office? I repeat that in some countries of the world Post Offices remain open on Saturdays and some on Sundays. For example, Sunday is not a closing day in Israel.

The question of the Post Offices closing or opening on Saturdays is no big thing. It is not to say that they were not accustomed to close half days on Saturdays. I would like to let it be made known that as far as working hours for postmen are concerned, as long as you are prepared to pay people for the hours they work and as long as you are prepared to say that there are certain premiums that you will pay for working on certain days, the question of when you work, is immaterial.

There are some people who work 365 days a year. There is a five day week on the docks in Bridgetown. People who work on the docks are paid for working on Sundays. Sunday is a premium day. Is production on docks any less? When you hear people talk about so many tons of cargo delivered today as compared with 25 years ago, can anyone say that production is less? In the Sugar Industry with machines you are producing more sugar per man than 25 years ago. 5.25 p.m.

With regard to this question as to whether the Government can open the Post Office on a Sunday, I would like to make it clear so far as the people who talk about the Union are concerned, that the Union is here to stay. The Union is part of the people. If some of you are so reactionary, all the reactionaries have to understand that the Union is here to stay, and if you think we are not here to stay, the Union will sweep you away. The Union will sweep away those who think it is not here to stay; we will push you away and we will push you away rudely too. So put this in your pipe and smoke it. These are not days when people are going to bow down and stoop. This is a different age. So get that clear.

You can look around the whole horizon. Look and see what is happening in Trinidad, see what is happening in Grenada, see what is happening in Jamaica. See what is happening all over the world and you will get some idea of the attitude of working people. If some of you believe that you are going to

push people around, you are making a big mistake. This is not any 1837 or any 1874. This is 1974, and if some of you have on 1874 caps on your head you had better take them off. If there are some Members in this Assembly who would like to come in here and draw \$1, 000 a month for coming in here one day a week — Members of the House must get paid at \$1, 000 a month but then when you come to the people you have to pay, telling them nonsense about a five day week, let all such Members go in the Treasury and give back some of the money they get. (Asides) Any Member in here who will have the brass to go to the Treasury and lift up \$1, 000 a month and telling somebody about a five day week and a three day week and all that nonsense, it is time that such Members of the House shut their mouths. There is a lot of foolish joking when you come to the realities. If the Government has decided to open the Post Office a five day week, that is the Government's business. So far as the Union is concerned the Union has not had any discussion with the Government about the Post Office, if there is to be a five day week or if they can open on Sundays. You say you want a five day week, we say we are not going to work on Sundays. Get that straight.

But, the workers have problems with the Ministries. We have problems now. Suppose the House of Assembly was a different place; if the House of Assembly were a different place there would be definitely a strike. You are talking about the Reporters are not going to eat until Members are finished eating? I am telling you that there would have to be a strike, because if you are saying that the Reporters must not eat before you eat, well nobody will eat. You mean that the Reporters must sit down and wait until you have finished eating?

What I would say is this. In some instances some of the public servants, and civil servants, are too civil for my speed, because I am amazed to think that you can find a man, who is not insane, will accept somebody telling him that the worker must eat after he is finished eating. So I want to make it clear that a five-day week and a four-and-a-half day week and a three-day week for those who have lived long enough in the world — there is a three day week now in

England.....Mr. Deputy Speaker some time last year you could not get gasoline on Saturdays or Bankholidays because the proprietors of the gasoline stations decided that because they wanted more money for gasoline, as a means of pressurizing the Government, they were not going to open the gasoline stations on some occasions. What did the people say? Nobody locked them up. They did not get arrested. But they closed down the gasoline stations, and some of the workers had days off as a result of this. All this they did to pressurize the Government in order to get a higher price for gasoline, but when you get the workers saying 'we would like a five day or we would like better conditions, ' you say 'oh, the workers do not want to work.' But I say this. Tomorrow, if the Government decides that they are going to open the Post Office on Saturdays, you will find the Postmen willing to work on the basis that you treat the postmen as they should be treated.

All over the world conditions have changed and we have to make up our minds and make a change too. There is no point every now and again talking about a five day week, a four day week, and putting pictures in the newspapers with garbage piling up because there is a five day week. If garbage is piling up, well go and move the garbage then. Where the garbage has come from? Have the people put it there? Have they piled up all the garbage? If you want the garbage carried away, well then pay and have the garbage carried away. If you want a Rolls Royce but you are paying buggy money, well still want a Rolls Royce then. Don't go and look for a buggy.

In Barbados we have a postal service that is very elaborate and elite. You have people coming up to your door knocking at your door, but there are many places in the United States of America — a lot of people in Barbados have the idea that the United States of America is a place of all gold, and that every postman comes where you live....I was in Detroit and over there you have to walk and go out to a post box and pick up your mail too. In Barbados you can get a postman coming to your place every day, wherever you live. They can't find you oftentimes. The postman often has to go and ask 'where does Mr. Jonathan Sobers live about here?' The fact is, people do not spell out their names. They put down 'Mr. A. Sobers' for 'Mr. Abraham Sobers', and the postman must walk about asking for 'Mr. A. Sobers'. The postman has to look for somebody, and the person he asks will tell him 'the woman living down there by the red-painted house. Go down there and you will find her.' That is how the postman has to find people because of the way the address is given. The postman's job in Barbados is not any joke. 5.35 p.m.

All of these things a Postman has to do. A Postman's job in Barbados is not any job where he can go to number 89, of any particular street and drop a letter in a box, he is a kind of detective. He has to be a C.I.A. man instead of a Postman, because usually the other people in the district tell the Postman where to find an addressee. When you talk about numbering houses that is a very expensive exercise, but the only principles you have in Barbados are those which were here since 1903. You will probably hear now that instead of spending money numbering houses you should build more houses or something like this. These are problems in our society and the postal service we have is an employment service that as it grows bigger more pressures will be brought to bear upon it. I am sure that you will find that from the population of Barbados the number of people you employ in the postal service will be a very high ratio, and this is a personalised service that people do not get elsewhere, so you have to bear this in mind. New York has 10 million people, more than all the West Indian Islands put together, and you are not talking about any place with 150, 000 people, so we cannot begin to compare ourselves with New York.

I feel that when it comes to the question of honesty and integrity that you will get dishonesty and you will have a system to deal with it, because the ecclesiastical people found that even in Paradise there were dishonest people and they had to chase them out. That was a place for the elect, therefore it means that where there is no elect, where good and bad reside side by side, you will have these problems. Here in Barbados petty stealing will be more prevalent than in big societies, and when a letter feels a little heavier than another one it is liable to drop out of the bag on the way. A lot of boys went to Harrison College and a lot of girls went to Queen's College out of society money which dropped out somewhere along the line, so therefore you do not go on quarrelling about these things, they will happen. You have to be fair enough to know that your postal system is a hang-over from the past, and the longer you have a system which is a hang-over from the past the more difficult it is to bring it up-to-date.

Twenty years ago, we were to build a Post Office where the Treasury Building is now, but it was rejected. Mr. Lewis drew the plans and everything but this just did not materialise. I think the postal service in Barbados is not the best in the world, and I am not complacent about it, but I am very pleased to hear they are going to build a new Post Office. I was a member of the Executive Committee as far back as 25 years ago and I came off the Estimates Committee on one occasion because I was disgusted when I found out that people in the Post Office were sitting at tables equivalent to kitchen tables, and that was 25 years ago so you must understand that I have strong feelings about the Post Office and I am aware that a good Post Office is needed. I hope that when the new Post Office is constructed, it will be a first class one with modern facilities that you will be able to have your service in such a manner that the public will be more than satisfied.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have never attempted to disguise that this is an increase in the postal service, what I do not understand with the Opposition is that the price of everything will go up for everybody in Barbados but the price of running a service for the Government is presumed to remain static, and every time the Government comes down with escalating costs for any particular service you hear that you are fleecing the poor man or that the Government is trying to raise revenue for an empty Treasury or some nonsense like that. Any readjustment by this Government of a penny, however legitimate, is characterised as an attempt to fill up an empty Treasury. I say now that just as the cost of administration, of wages and of material has gone up for any private citizen or enterprise in this country, every day the Government is faced with increasing and escalating costs for the services it provides for the people, whether they are drugs for the hospital, a wheel chair for an invalid or better houses, and therefore the Government has to get taxes from the people. I have said before that the Government has not got a money tree, therefore it has to use the services which it provides to readjust the tariffs depending on the costs of operating those services. They seem to have a mentality which dictates that if a worker is getting a penny and you ask for another penny for him it means 100% increase.

Mr. MOTTLEY:

On a point of order, the hon. Member must be consistent in his statements. Some time ago he said it was the Trade Union which did that and he must not now accuse the Opposition of it. Because the hon. Member for St. Michael West is here he is afraid to accuse him of it now.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

I do not deal with percentage, I deal with what is reasonable and what is fair, whether it is 1, 000% or not. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition is so politically minded that he must dream, sleep and eat politics. Even in a Christmas message he could not help but being politically minded; to wish somebody peace on earth and goodwill to men, he has to make it political. 5.45 p.m.

He talks of my recent difficulties. I would like to pay tribute to him for being Isaiah and being able to prophesy them three months ago at his Annual Conference, if there are any difficulties. He was playing Isaiah, the Prophet. I would like to pay tribute to him for being a clairvoyant and a prophet to prophesy difficulties. Be that as it may, I am not making any apologies for the increase in revenue for the Post Office. I am interested in no percentages. I am interested in whether the rates are reasonable and fair to the people of Barbados; and when you look at the tariff as set down, there can be no doubt that the rates are fair and reasonable. But you get the type of political thinking that the people of this country must be told at every turn that they must not pay for the services which they get. I am not of that school. I am prepared to say that we must provide services for the people. The people must therefore pay a fair and reasonable amount for these services, and to go on fooling them that a Government is oppressing them because the Government adjusts a tariff to suit the cost of running a service is absolute cheap political talk, and you are not doing the people any good by telling them that, because the average Barbadian person knows that if he has got an efficient service he is prepared to pay for it, and when you shout 150% and 60%, that means absolutely nothing. When you got 40% and 50% on your salary, you did not say anything either. Did you shout it in here? Have you ever not drawn it as the Hon. Member for Christ Church West said? I have drawn mine every month and needed it; so do not go telling people they are not supposed to pay.....

Mr. ADAMS:

The hon. Member is misrepresenting the motives of an hon. Member when he says that the hon. Member for Christ Church West said he was not going to draw his salary.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I have not heard that.

Mr. ADAMS:

He said, have you not drawn it as the hon. Member for Christ Church West. He is ascribing hypocrisy to the hon. Member for Christ Church West, by saying that he said so and yet drew it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I do not agree with the hon. Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

The Post Office service is a good service. It is working under conditions some of which have been adumbrated by the hon. Member for St. Michael West. He was very vivid in how he explained the difficulties under which these people work. This Government is committed to giving the people the best possible service that is available, and if you have travelled as some of them have travelled, they should know that we have a very good postal service, taking into account the circumstances under which the people operate. I am not getting into any discussion on any five day week. At Christmas when we wanted to let the mail flow, we opened the Post office and when we took the statistics of the use of the Post office, we found that to take away the four hours in the morning did not make all the difference to the public now shoutt-out that it is closed. We took statistics when they were negotiating and we took the number of people who visited on a Saturday and found, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if you removed the four hours so much was not lost. But as the hon. Member for St. Michael West said, we have the right that if mail is to be delivered or the volume of mail requires it, we will pay people to work in those circumstances; so I am not going over a five day week which is a fait accompli, and the public of Barbados is not suffering any inconvenience. All you have to do in Barbados is to adjust your life to suit the circumstances. Manning Wilkinson & Challenor closes between 11.00 a.m. and twelve noon; if you want a hinge, would you go at twelve or stand up at the door from 11 o'clock a.m. to twelve noon? They do not stone Manning Wilkinson & Challenor. If you have a letter to post, post it on Friday or post from Monday to Friday, or write it on the week-end and first thing Monday morning post it. But you get people who because they have been accustomed to something, they just cannot adjust themselves to a new situation. All you have to do is to adjust and the inconvenience is alleviated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall say nothing more because all the Leader of the Opposition did was to take the opportunity naturally — he thinks it is political and any revenue matter is political and he must get his little piece — of telling the public how the Government wants revenue. It is not a question of revenue; it is a question that the people must pay for the services which they need and get.

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

On the motion of Hon. F. G. SMITH, seconded by Hon. P. G. MORGAN, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill. Mr. LOWE took the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 5 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. F. G. SMITH, seconded by Hon. P. G. MORGAN, Mr CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. F. G. SMITH seconded by Hon. P.G. MORGAN, the bill was read a third time and passed. Its was agreed to.

RESOLUTION RE THE INCREASE IN POSTAL PACKET RATES

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the next Item under Government Business is a Resolution to approve the postal rates on packets transmitted from Barbados. Approval has been granted by the House to deal with it in all its stages today.

Hon. F. G. SMITH:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am grateful to hon. Members for giving permission to deal with this matter. It is proposed to bring these rates into effect on 1st February, 1974. I take it that the strictures which have been given by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition are applicable to the present measure.

The Addendum sets out quite clearly the reason for this Resolution and I think honourable Members have read the Addendum, which is short.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. P. G. MORGAN:

I beg to second that.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1973-74 No. 30

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr.. Deputy Speaker, the next item, No, 1, is a Resolution to grant a sum of \$244, 030 from the Consolidated Fund and place it at the disposal of the Government for the service of the Island.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply.

Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE:

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 of Supply. Mr. W. R. LOWE took the Chair.

Head 13 - Customs - was called.

Hon. C E. TALMA:

Mr. Chairman, in moving the passing of Head 13 - Customs, Item 19 - Duty Allowance, for the sum of \$10, 015 the position is that an amount of \$52, 000 was approved in the 1973-74 Estimates to meet the cost of duty allowances to staff members of the Customs who are employed on a shift system. Up to the week ending 21st October, 1973, expenditure on this item was \$40, 545.

5.55 p.m.

There is an increase in the staff on shift duties at Seawell International Airport by an additional 8 Officers, and effective from the 1st April, 1973, there was an increase in the duty allowance from \$50.00 per person to \$80.00 per person for Officers and Guards on shift duties. This increased rate of expenditure was not reflected in the current provision, hence the request for a Supplementary in the sum of \$10, 011.03. The position, Sir, is quite clear in that respect.

As far as the other items are concerned, the amount originally voted for casual labour was \$2, 750 in the Estimates. Up to the week ending 23rd October, 1973, expenditure on this item was \$2, 304.86. There was an increase in the wages of two casual cleaners from \$16.00 and \$11.00 to \$24.00 and \$18.00 a week respectively, as a result of the revision of wages and salaries. This amount is needed to be supplemented for the remainder of the financial year.

I beg to move that Head 13 — Customs — stand part.

Mrs. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that.

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

Head 21 - Establishments Division - was called.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 21 - Establishments Division -stand part. There are three items here. Item 17 -Temporary Staff - \$225, 550; Item 25 – Utilities - \$3, 000; and National Insurance Contributions - \$2, 275. With regard to Item 17— Temporary Staff - the original amount of \$936, 000 was provided for the purpose of emoluments to Temporary Staff, and out of that amount a total of \$777, 550.99 was spend up to the end of November, 1973, leaving the sum of \$158, 499.01. To date the monthly expenditure has been approximately \$108, 000, but, taking into consideration the recent establishment of several temporary posts, it is anticipated that this will reduce to approximately \$96, 000. Based on this amount, the sum of \$384, 000 will be required to the end of the financial year, taking into account the sum of \$158, 449 which is still available and in the vote. It is necessary to supplement

the amount by \$225, 250.

As far as Item 25 - Utilities - is concerned, the amount originally voted was \$12, 500 to meet the cost of electricity at Government Headquarters.

I beg to move that Head 21 stand part. Mrs. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that.

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

Head 36 — Ministry of Education (12) Public Library — was called.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 36 - Ministry of Education (12) Public Library - stand part.

Mrs. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that.

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

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Resolution for the sum of \$244, 030 do now pass.

Mrs. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that. The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

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

Mrs. EASTMOND:

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 Mrs. G. L. EASTMOND, the Resolution was read a first, and second time, and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. E. TALMA:

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

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 29th January, 1973, at twelve noon.

Mrs. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that.

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

6.03 p.m.