

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION OF 1971 - 76

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 21st October, 1975.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 o'clock p.m.

PRESENT

His Honour C. A. E. HOPPIN: (Deputy Speaker); Hon. C. E. TALMA, C.B.E., (Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the House); Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, B.Sc., (Econ.) LL.D., (Prime Minister); Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, (Minister without Portfolio); Mr. R. St.C. WEEKES, J.P.; Mr. W. R. LOWE, J.P., (Chairman of Committees); Mr. W. C. B. HINDS; Mr. ELLIOTT D. MOTTLEY, Esquire; Mr. C. L. BOLDEN, LL.B.; Hon. F. G. SMITH, Q.C., S.C., B.A., (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport); 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 Communications and Works); Hon. A. MORRISON, (Minister of Agriculture, Science and Technology); Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A. (Econ.), (Minister of Health and Welfare) and Mr. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M.

Prayers were read.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting for Tuesday, 14th October, 1975, have been circulated and are before you for confirmation, and unless there are any amendments, they will be confirmed.

There being no amendments, those Minutes are duly confirmed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:—

The Resolution to grant the sum of \$221,100 from the Consolidated Fund and place it at the disposal of the Government to Supplement the Estimates 1975-76, Part I - Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates, 1975-76, No. 13, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:—

- (1) The Resolution to grant the sum of \$30,153 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1975-76 Part II - Capital, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1975-76 No. 14 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.
- (2) The Resolution to grant the sum of \$118,000 from the Consolidated Fund and place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1975-76, Part I - Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1975-76, No. 15 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Provided, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no objection from the Opposition, I will be asking leave to deal with this second Resolution in all its stages today.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

The Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of Land at

Clapham in the parishes of St. Michael and Christ Church for Housing development.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Health Services Act.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. LOWE: Mr. Deputy speaker, I am asking leave on behalf of the Deputy Speaker to ask the following question:

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

- (a) Is the Minister aware that there are no adequate playing or recreational facilities available to the residents of the Lower Estate area of St. George.
- (b) Will the Minister consider acquiring for that community the playing field situate at Lower Estate Plantation and used for cricket by the Sheffield Cricket Club, and erecting a recreational centre thereon, for the general use and advantage of all the residents of the area?"

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, I believe you might wish to have the records put straight, because the hon. member who has just sat down should have asked leave to put the question on behalf of the hon. member for St. George North, and not on behalf of the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That point is well taken. I heard the hon. member for St. George South say "the Deputy Speaker". He should correctly have said "the hon. member for St. George North".

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, seconded by Hon. C. E. TALMA, a Bill to amend the Health Services Act, was read a first time.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42, 43, and 44 be suspended for the remainder of this sitting, with the usual undertaking that if there is anything urgent with

which the Opposition wish to deal, they will be at liberty to do so.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply. Mr. LOWE took the Chair.

The Resolution for the sum of \$3,150,000 was called.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1975-76

No. 10

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Chairman, this is a Resolution for the sum of \$3,150,000 in order to refinance the Barbados Marketing Corporation. Now the Addendum sets out the reasons why we need this money, and I just want to remind hon. members that in dealing with this particular matter hon. members will recall that the Barbados Marketing Corporation like one or two other corporations, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and the Agricultural Development Corporation, were not given working capital at the time of their establishment with the result that these Corporations have had to borrow money from time to time whether by way of overdraft or short term loans from various commercial banks, and with the high rates of interest as there are today and over the last few years, the high rates of interest have swallowed and completely swallowed up the profits. As a result the Barbados Marketing Corporation was refinanced in 1968 and certain improvements were introduced by the then Minister in so far as financing arrangements, bookkeeping and reorganising the entire Barbados Marketing Corporation was concerned.

12.25 p.m.

Conditions down there have improved to some extent, but unless you have a clear sheet and unless you can get away from all these

enormous sums of interest on these loans at such high rates you will never have profits. That has been the situation down there for the last two years. The matter of refinancing the Barbados Marketing Corporation has been engaging the attention of Cabinet for the last few weeks. Certain proposals were put to the Minister of Finance which have been examined closely over the last few weeks, and those proposals call for the expenditure of even larger sums than we have come here with, and all types of people who are trained in economics and finance examined these matters before we came here with this supplementary resolution for \$3,150,000. They were asking for a larger sum and it was based on the fact that their financial year has expired at the end of June this year.

I think it is only proper to give a brief summary of some of the operations of the BMC over the last few years. I think the Committee is entitled to know something about it. I am aware of the fact that we have done this for the past three or four years, but it is still my duty to tell the Committee something of the operation of the BMC over the last few years.

During 1972 the trading activities of the Corporation were increased to make a greater impact in the area of food distribution and to further stimulate the production of vegetables, eggs and poultry. The Corporation became the sole importer of poultry and later vegetables. It was felt by the Ministry then that the increased trade would have been on a cash basis and that the profits would have been used to produce larger quantities of local produce and by so doing stimulate the prices paid to the farmers. The farmers are paid on a cash on delivery basis, but as far as customers of the BMC are concerned it was not the intention of the Ministry to have it on a COD basis, but owing to more attractive credit terms offered by the competitors of the BMC even though the BMC's prices were lower, yet they were not able to carry through these cash transactions all the time, so that there are certain people who owe the BMC some money owing to the fact that the competition put up by competitors in trade, even though the BMC's things were cheaper and more attractive in price, yet the credit terms offered by competitors were greater, so the BMC eventually found itself giving some credit and there are certain customers who have received credit from the BMC even though it is not their policy.

At the end of 1974 the bank overdraft was a substantial sum, over \$1 million, and in August, 1974 the Corporation was forced to secure a loan of \$400,000 from the First National City Bank.

The losses of the Corporation over the last six years amounted to \$2,357,000. The projected sales for the year 1974-75 are estimated at \$9,264,700 and the loss is estimated at \$300,000. The main factors contributing to the losses of the Corporation during the past six years were finance charges as I have already intimated, subsidy on the Abattoir, spoilage and incidental expenses for the year 1974. These factors contributed to 60% of the losses for the year besides the special services which were imported for the entering into contracts with producers for collecting produce at the various farms where it is grown. That accounted for approximately \$60,000 per annum and cold storage charges of \$76,000 for goods held at the Port due to lack of finance also contributed to these losses.

Without money the Corporation became more and more involved and they had to pay charges for goods in the Port which put them into further debt of \$76,000. Mr. Chairman, you will be surprised to know that despite the increase of 40% in the fees for slaughtering animals in the Abattoir the projected losses in 1974-75 are over \$182,000 and those losses they got from the gross profits generated from the trading activities of the Corporation.

The various areas in which the Corporation has lost are pinpointed, but as I said, mainly finance charges, borrowing large sums of money at high rates of interest and having to service those loans from the very inception, from 1961, contributed to the present situation. I say that because I was the Minister who started off the Barbados Marketing Corporation as Minister of Lands and Fisheries. It started without working capital and it has accumulated interest upon interest upon interest compound interest, over the years and that is why the Corporation is in this position today, apart from other considerations like spoilage and the old cold storage plant which has become obsolete. The money which we are asking for, this \$3,150,000, is broken down as follows:

Bank overdraft	\$2,250,000
Repayment of short term loans from the First National City Bank	400,000
	<u>\$2,650,000</u>
Less approved capital contri- bution in 1975-76 Estimates	650,000
12.35 p.m.	<u>\$2,000,000</u>

When we deduct \$650,000 from \$2,650,000 we are left with \$2 million. Then the working capital for importation of basic food items excluding any new activity is \$750,000. This is the supermarket section which imports all sorts of things. There are two sets of activities down there: one is basically to encourage local production and to stabilise prices; the other is the supermarket for setting the commercial policy. The last item is the replacement of cold storage machinery by machinery suitable for re-location on any new site, \$400,000, making a total of \$3,150,000. That is the breakdown of the sum of \$3,150,000.

The abattoir has been heavily subsidised, but I do not see how an abattoir could be running at a loss. Mr. Chairman, that is a brief and accurate account of the operations that have been going on at the B.M.C. over the past six years.

As the Addendum sets out this additional provision is mainly for the retirement of the short-term Loans made by the Corporation, for Working Capital and for the replacement of the cold storage machinery which has become obsolescent. It is not a very nice story to tell, but I have endeavoured to give it as it is. Hon. members are in possession of the Reports, and they know the position.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

Mr. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, the operation of the B.M.C. has been one of the most disturbing questions which, I believe, not only the Government and the Opposition, but the people of this country have had to face over the years. The Hon. Leader of the House is seeking to reduce the effects of what is happening to it down to its minimum by saying that he was the Minister of Agriculture, Trade and Fisheries when the B.M.C. was set up, and that it was set up without working capital. I am sure that if the hon. member would look back at the accounts of the B.M.C. he would....

Hon. C. E. TALMA: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I was the Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries and not Trade.

Mr. BOLDEN: If I said "Trade" I apologise. He was the Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries, and I am sure that if he would look at the accounts of his Ministry he

would find that the B.M.C. got itself in this position only within the last two or three years. This was not the status of the B.M.C. in 1961 and 1962, because the B.M.C. has been used by the Government in all kinds of methods without knowing exactly where the Government wanted to put it, which role it had to play, and the B.M.C. did not know what it was doing. It was put to deal with agriculture; it was taken out of agriculture and put to deal with trade. There was nothing more than the manipulation of this particular institution at the whims and fancies of the Government to the detriment of the community at large.

Now, if one looked at the operations of the B.M.C. today, and if one considered that the Government are saying that they are going to refinance the B.M.C. in the sum of \$3.1 million, in the light of the breakdown given by the Hon. Minister, one will see clearly that after the money is passed today the B.M.C. will be in just as bad a position as it was with the exception that it will not have to pay interest on the overdraft of \$2 million, and it still does not have working capital. In what position do the Government want to see the B.M.C.? The Minister will have to tell the House about that.

The Minister says that the B.M.C., because of competition from private enterprise, was forced to give credit to certain persons. But what the Minister has not said is that the B.M.C. has been licked by its competitors, who purchase the goods the B.M.C. bring here, with the result that the B.M.C. will always remain as a second-rate institution as long as Government continue to operate in this way. Who are the people who owe the B.M.C. money? How much do they owe the B.M.C.? The sum of \$76,000 was involved in goods which were left at the Harbour and could not be cleared.

Let us look at the matter from this point of view. The Government have come to this House for \$3.1 million for the B.M.C. Could not the Government come to this House at an earlier date and say that the B.M.C. was in a position where it would have to lose \$76,000 and, therefore, they wanted a short-term provision made by Parliament to clear the goods at the Harbour? The rumour is all over Bridgetown that private enterprise is making the profits that the B.M.C. should be making. The Minister knows what I am talking about. You are now telling me that you want to put the B.M.C. on a proper footing — C.B.C. and A.D.C. are on a proper footing. This is the time when agriculture can get moving in this country and you have reached a stage where the B.M.C.

will not be able to function in accordance with the Act under which it was set up.
12.45 p.m.

You talk about contract buying; you say you lose money on contract buying. You talk about wastage; you talk about collection. Now answer a simple question. A couple weeks ago there was a story in the newspaper of a man who decided that he was going into pig farming on a full scale. He comes out and he says now that he is ready the BMC say that there is a glut.

That is why Barbados will never have a proper agricultural community. They have never had a proper agricultural policy therefore we will never have a proper agricultural community. There is not a proper agricultural marketing policy so therefore you can never have a proper agricultural community, I emphasise. What was the story of onions last year? The farmers who went out and grew their onions on the basis that they would be sold to the BMC had their onions lying on the ground. I know one particular farmer had his onions lying on the ground for two weeks.

Take the question of English potatoes. The farmers grew their English potatoes but then when it came to the question of pricing, the pricing lies in another department, and therefore, what has happened to English potatoes growing in Barbados? This is a question we must look at.

I say here and now, the Government must decide whether they want an agricultural community here in Barbados or not. They must decide whether they are going to compare what prices are paid by the producer and consumer for goods in relation to when they are dumping from outside into Barbados and determine what policy they want. I say now that the BMC should be in the Ministry of Agriculture wholly and solely because the farmer who grows his produce has to deal with the Ministry of Agriculture about growing, about weedicides, about pesticides. It is when he comes to the importation that he finds he has to deal with the Ministry of Trade; the Minister of Trade decides on a completely different basis, and the problem with this is that the Minister of Agriculture decides one thing and the Minister of trade decides something else on different principles altogether than what the Minister of Agriculture decides on. Even when the Ministry of Agriculture decides on a policy you will hear 'it has gone down to trade, Trade has not yet had a chance to look at it,' but in the

meantime that Trade is trying to look at it the farmer is out there stewing. The BMC then finds itself with the end product of everything; and they cannot deny this.

When the Minister talks about competition from outside, I say here and now, the bulk of farmers in Barbados use the BMC as a dumping ground for second quality goods and will continue to do that as long as there is no fixed policy at the BMC.

The Minister of Agriculture tells you to grow more food, do this, do that. The BMC even if they are in a position to take in, they have not been in a position to pay as and when the farmer requires his money. They have not been able to clear their own goods from the Port, and if they are talking about re-financing, what do we do? You re-finance and you give the BMC a sufficient amount of money that it can carry out the objects and reasons for which it has been established, and then you assess the whole situation. You do not cut it short and say, 'well, we are giving this now, we are looking back at the Estimates for something else.'

This Government has always treated agriculture as second hand in priority; I believe it is the last in the list of priorities. Even although in the Queen's Speech there appear to be a new emphasis on agriculture, today has made me even sadder, that the Government has not appreciated the importance of agriculture in a community like ours.

The BMC is being used openly as a tool to do a job which it is not equipped to do. You talk about a supermarket. The BMC supermarket cannot control prices in Barbados no matter what anybody tells you. We have got to understand in Barbados that people shop according to their likes and dislikes, according to the environment. There is still status feeling to shop at Goddards, shop at Ys, to shop at these places, and even though, as the Minister said, the BMC offer goods cheaper the people go elsewhere to shop; because if you are going to set up a supermarket to compete you have to set it up in a particular area with competition. Nobody is going to travel from Christ Church down to the BMC to buy a tin of something one cent cheaper and on the other hand if the BMC is set up to stimulate agriculture in Barbados, as I have often said, I do not see how you can tell me you are going to use the BMC to sell imported diced carrots, imported beef, imported canned stuff in competition with the local farmer, and tell me

that you are trying to influence prices in Barbados. It cannot operate it has no effect whatsoever, and I said before, let the BMC get out of the things it is not capable of doing and doing well.

The BMC is a farmer's institution and that is what it should be. It must not enter into the field of competition. If the Minister of Trade cannot find a different method of regulating prices in Barbados, let him call in his experts and let them give him the answer; but he must not keep throwing away money in a BMC supermarket which everybody understands is a second rate place.

The question of spoilage arises because if the BMC had been functioning according to the Act and in the way it should function it would take in farmers' goods and distribute them in a day, but as I said, the BMC is there and can only handle second quality goods; the first quality is sold to all the institutions outside, and the second quality is left for the poor class people who will go down to the BMC to shop, and they are not in a sufficient number to take off what excess is thrown to the BMC.

Now these are the things I have to say on this Bill. It is no use the Government coming in here and giving figures of this kind. I say that when it is finished the BMC will find itself back in the same situation. If Government has got a declared policy on agriculture the Government has to look at the BMC in the true light.

I heard in this very Chamber the Minister of Agriculture said that the ADC was to set the pattern for agriculture in this country, the ADC was to grow so many thousand acres of corn in this country to set the pattern, the ADC was to produce so much food in this country to set a pattern, that the ADC was to grow cotton of this nature. None of them came out light; and the ADC was re-financed to the tune of \$7 million. The last Minister of Agriculture got up in here and said he had given instruction that not another blade of corn should be grown on ADC land, the ADC should feed the country. What is the ADC doing today? Have you seen the corn? Have you seen the vegetables? Have you seen the livestock? No, not yet; but \$7 million in the ADC.

The BMC is the one institution that saved the small farmer in this country and as I said last week to the Honourable Prime Minister, Government has got to decide if it wants small farmers or if it is going for the big farmer and eliminate all the small farmers, because if you ask those in authority at the BMC they will tell

you that 80% of their business is dealing with the small farmer and 20% is the sub-standard goods of the large farmer; when he cannot sell it to his private outlets he throws it into the BMC; but here is the time again that you want to save the small farmer, and the Government comes down here with a nilly-willy Bill to tell you they are re-financing the BMC.

Who gets squeezed in a time when you talk about a glut? The poor pig farmer from St. Peter who has ten pigs to sell but he cannot get any sold because he does not have contact with this place or the other place. The big farmer had his contacts made already. The BMC is the institution to help the small farmer — the man who goes down there with his hundred pounds of beef, his twenty pounds of beef, his carrots etc., and he has no recourse. The big farmers have got their own marketing system set up; they have their own outlets; but the Government, in my opinion, has got no uses for the small farmer. The Government's policy on agriculture is hay wire; completely hay wire.

We heard of an Agrarian policy. The last Minister of Agriculture talked about an Agrarian policy — everybody producing a little bit of something in the backyard.

12.55 p.m.

The Minister himself said that he does not want to see any 2 acre man in this, no 2 acre asphalt gardens. He does not want to see it. What do you want the 2 acre man to do? He wants the 2 acre man to produce food, but where is the 2 acre man going to market his food? You make no provision whatever for him.

The Minister talked about transportation. He has lost money on the collection of goods from small farmers. We do not collect from the big farmers. It is the small farmer, the man who operates on a half acre or a 2 acre lot. Those are the people you collect from; but, as I say, if you have no fixed policy you can never come right; but long, too long, has this Government paid half hearted support to agriculture. It is only when agriculture is doing good that this Government comes in and grabs the sweets; but it leaves the farmer himself to the mercies of the elements and the banks and then they go in and reap the sweets.

Nothing that the Minister has said has shown that the Government's policy on agriculture has changed. The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation does not buy anything from anybody other than a few canned films that they put out. They take in all the advertisements etc. The Caribbean

Broadcasting Corporation has been able to come back and say that they made a profit of so much.

The Government wrote off completely the debt of the Transport Board, and they came back and said that they made a profit. Not only did they write off, but they gave them adequate working capital. As far as the Agricultural Development Corporation is concerned, they wiped out their debts and gave them adequate working capital and I say now that the ADC now goes and borrows money like any other institution and has the proper working capital when the year comes. They borrow money at cheaper interest rates.

The BMC is left with \$400,000 to operate on. If the Minister says that \$9 million in sales is expected over the 1974-75 period is he telling me that the BMC is this magical institution that it can operate on \$400,000 and have sales of \$9 million in less than a year? It is absolutely clear that the Government has no intention of allowing the BMC to operate in this country.

The BMC finds itself in competition with magnates and powers greater than itself unless the Government is prepared to support it and now once and for all to put the BMC on a proper footing. We have had the spectacle, and I have heard rumours of people employed at the BMC that the manager cannot give instructions to. When the Minister sends a man down there to work he says I am working at the BMC. We have had the story of people being dismissed from the BMC. One has to wonder if the Minister ever heard the story of the van belonging to the BMC which was sold by an officer of the BMC to himself and operated by two members of the staff who were dismissed for stealing and which backed into the BMC every day and moved out, and nobody could touch them.

There are a lot of things that the Government should seriously look at. It may sound like a joke, but it affects the entire community and it affects particularly the farmer, because if the farmer has no confidence in the institution where he must sell his goods, he is not going to produce them.

That is known all over the world and I do not understand why things have to be so different in Barbados when in every other country things work in line. The farmer knows that he is a producer. He knows that there is a marketing authority that takes his goods and disposes of them. He is assured that at the end of any season the goods that he produced will be sold to the Marketing Department. It will be sold to them for disposal. That is their business and

the farmers' business is to produce. His business is not to sell.

But, Sir, in this institution you have a conflict of interest. As I have said before, you have a great stigma running through Barbados today. The moment that you name a man a manager, God help this country. He is a boss unto himself, and nobody else can tell him what to do.

What is the true story of the fish that were lost at the B.M.C. a few weeks ago? In a country like Barbados can we afford to throw away high protein goods? One story appeared in the newspaper. I heard another story. I heard that the man who arranged to purchase it did not consult with the man who says that he has the authority to do the purchasing and therefore he said I am not touching it. You do what you feel like. So it went to waste.

I believe that the Government should have financed the B.M.C. to a sufficient sum that would give them an adequate working capital without recourse to the banks; because the moment you have to go to the banks you are working for the bankers. You are not working for yourself. That is what the Government is asking the B.M.C. to do — make the B.M.C. work for the bankers in Barbados. That is what is happening to the B.M.C. The Government should have carried through an investigation into the B.M.C. to find out what it has to do in relation to the farmer for purchasing and the consumer for marketing.

If the Government intends to use the B.M.C. as a means of subsidising the people of this country, it needs more money than this. Make it a perfect example of subsidising. If you call it a loan, you call it a loan. If you call it ignorance of business, call it ignorance of business. I call it subsidising in a different form.

The BMC contracts to buy goods at a specific price. Chicken at the moment is on a contract price of \$1.60 a pound; but you have your farmer producing chicken and selling it to the BMC at \$1.60 a pound and you have the BMC off loading it at \$1.40 a pound. Now it has gone down to \$1.30 a pound. Cabbage is on a contract price. Carrots are on a contract price and beets are on a contract price. This is a subsidy in some form or the other.

Now, if you are going to subsidise the community in this manner, where is the finance to come from if the B.M.C. has to buy chicken at \$1.60 a pound? At the end of the year it must show a loss again. I go further and say that

people are buying the B.M.C. produce at the cheaper price and selling it to the Government institutions at a higher price, and the profits are going into the pockets of certain magnates in this country.

Let us talk about the story of the importation of backs and necks into this country. They have been brought in by the B.M.C. and left down by the wharf and private enterprises have cleared them and sold them. If you go to buy them they will tell you that you are not one of us and you cannot get one of these.

1.05 p.m.

It was the B.M.C. that imported them; so can you tell me with all this in mind that the Government really cares about agriculturalists in this country? We get lip service being paid to agriculture. The Prime Minister himself said that Barbados should aim at an optimum figure of producing sugar cane of about 160,000 or 167,000 tons. That is when the going is good, when things are sweet. A couple of years ago he said he would like to drive through this country and not see one blade of cane. There is another gentleman who sits in the Senate who says that you can employ 1,000 people on an acre of land in industry, but there are three or four in agriculture. When the going is sweet, these are the people who come back and say this is mine, I want so much out of agriculture because I negotiated the prices. This is what is happening and I say here and now, and I do not care who gets vex with me, the poultry industry and the pig industry in this country have been killed within the last couple of months. These two industries have met their death by the importation of cheap beef in this country. If that Government had thought about agriculture, the first thing they would have done would be to say they have to protect not only the farmers in this country, but they have to look at the long term effect upon the consumers and would have placed a levy on the cheap beef, because when New Zealand last year had their big orders to give to China, Japan and the Far Eastern countries, beef was coming to Barbados at \$3.00 per pound and you could not eat it; but when the world is full of beef, they dump it in Barbados at 90 cents per pound and you can get it at \$1.00 a pound.

Mr. Chairman, the pig industry and the poultry industry have gone down the drain, and already people are writing to their importers in this country and saying that freight charges have gone up by 35%; so in a couple of months you will see what will happen to the pig industry and the poultry industry; you will see what will happen to the sheep industry. The sheep are

being slaughtered and you can ask the farmers who used to keep them in this country what is happening because you have no coordinating policy in agriculture. As long as you keep the Barbados Marketing Corporation divided between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Trade, God help us all in this country.

I said last week, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister of Agriculture is not doing his work. He has got to tell people in this country that either he is behind them as agriculturalists and farmers, or he is playing politics for the Government. He has to declare his hand somewhere along the line; he cannot keep in the twilight zone, because you are either in agriculture because you love it or you are in it because you are doing a job and you do not care. You must declare your hand here and now because the time is now ripe. Freight charges are going to kill this country if nothing else. The price of oil has been increased 10%. If you go to any store in Bridgetown now the shelves are literally empty. You get what you order; they do not bring surplus any more. Barbados has got to decide to feed its people. You cannot talk about 40 acre farms or 25 acre farms at Springhall. Whom do you believe as a young man is going to get up and say he is going into agriculture or into farming well knowing that at the end of the period he will hear that his produce cannot be sold? Or he hears that there is a glut because something is coming in from outside and he cannot give his family the same facilities or privileges which you give yours or the next man gives his. He can only do it when he is assured that at the end of the period his goods are going to be sold at a price which will give him the same standard of living as the man who works in Bridgetown. Unless we forget the days of old when the farmer or the agricultural worker was regarded as the bare-footed man or woman in the country who came to town on Saturdays with a pair of shoes strung around his neck because he was preserving the soles for Sundays, until we learn to understand that everyone of us whether in farming, as scavengers, a doctor or lawyer, is entitled to the same standard of living as anybody else, we cannot progress in our society.

Mr. Chairman, the world is changing daily and we have got to make every section of the community a worthwhile one, contributing to what we are trying to build as a nation; but you cannot have one section doing the donkey work and feeding other people. That is exactly what this Government is doing. In 1970 I said in here that I had read a report which was written by Professor Gaitskill and Sir Arthur Lewis in which they said that the developing countries have a

tendency to look at the developed countries and believe that industry is the only thing for their existence. They make this mistake because agriculture came first and they have been able to take out of their industries to provide enough subsidy to put agriculture in first position and then let it work on its own, because it is no good developing an industry and then importing all the food to feed your people.

We talk about the tourist industry in this country, but what do we get? I will never forget, Mr. Chairman, that four years ago a client of mine came to Barbados and stayed at one of the famous hotels on the west coast. He invited me down for lunch and the first thing he said was that he did not understand our people in this country. Foolish me became vexed. I asked him what he meant and he said that that morning he had eggs for breakfast served in his room and a U.S. stamp was on the eggs. The U.S. State Department puts a label on all its exports and they are marked "A" or "B" or "C". Even the eggs served in the hotel were imported from abroad. He was not a Barbadian and he thought we were foolish because in tourism we were importing 90% of the food we needed in the industry, and then you have a Minister of Tourism who will come in here and try to fool ignorant people in Barbados that tourism is doing all this good for Barbados. What good is it doing? In this modern day the only thing you will get out of tourism is if you feed them with the food you produce, because the airlines take all the profits in bringing them here, the bulk of the hotels here are foreign owned and the money goes back out, and the little bit of money paid for services rendered cannot keep this country going. If they are bringing the food in, you are sending the money back outside. There was a time when two big hotels used to keep cold storage at the B.M.C. and bring everything they wanted, from an egg to a stake, and store it down there, while Barbados is giving away the sand, the sea, the sun and everything else.

Mr. Chairman, the only survival we have got is in agriculture. I have spoken to a hotel proprietor who said to me that it is pitiful that everytime you call the Barbados Marketing Corporation and ask whether they can guarantee a supply of product "X" for the next six months, they will tell you that they do not know if they would have it. If you had an agricultural policy, if the Government had put the B.M.C. back into the Ministry of Agriculture, things would be different, and I am saying in 1975 that it is the right time for the Government to create a Ministry of Food and put the B.M.C. and agriculture under it and leave the Ministry of

Trade to deal with the commerce and consumer goods which are not produced in Barbados, so that one Minister, one set of economists and all these people would operate in what could be produced in Barbados and what is available in Barbados.
1.15 p.m.

That is exactly what we want to do, and the BMC must be sufficiently financed that it is able to operate without the assistance or without the support of the commercial interests outside who will only support it when they get the benefits from it and the BMC takes the losses. That is the position today, and \$76,000 in Port charges is paid by the BMC for the benefit of somebody outside. The overdraft charges at the Bank means that the BMC has been working for the banks in this country for the last four or five years. It means that every firm in this country has been working for the banks in Barbados, and that is exactly what the Government has created not for the benefit of farmers but for the benefit of the banks and private enterprise outside. It is time if we talk about a policy whereby you are going to feed your people it has to come from the Ministry of Agriculture and be carried right through to the end in agriculture. You cannot have the two Ministries fighting neck and neck. I have never seen what is called Cabinet Government when each member is responsible for the other that you have Ministers fighting like dogs, like two heavy-weight fighters in a ring, trying to find out who will get the biggest benefit out of doing this as against the other.

Mr. Chairman, I say today is still a sad day for the BMC. I have often said in this Chamber that the BMC has a vital role to play in the community, but it can only do it if Government supports it. If Government is not prepared to support it Government can give it to private enterprise and see how it operates, but Government has a duty to the farmers in this country because the BMC is the support particularly of the small farmer. The small farmer in this country is a man of guts. He has no facilities for loans. As I said last week, the large farmers in this country have the Agricultural Credit Bank, the Sugar Industry Bank, the AAA Act, and even the Banks have to lend them money at a cheaper rate. The small farmers in this country are referred to what is called the Agricultural Credit Bank at the Garrison and the red tape you have to go through makes you get nothing in the long run.

I want to show the plight of the small man in this country. A man came into my office who owns four acres of land in Brittons

Hill. Mr. Chairman, there are some people who talk a lot but do not know what is going on. The heavy rains in the last two months have wrecked havoc with the farming in this country. The man said that because of the rains everything has been washed out and he needs \$1,100 to get going again in production. He went to the Agricultural Credit Bank, he has a house and a motor car and they would not take that as security, so he went to the bank and the bank told him they would lend him the money at 12% interest but he must have somebody to back it up, so he came to me, the shadow Minister of Agriculture, offering me \$100 to back the loan for him. If he had over 25 acres he would fill out a form, send it to the Sugar Industry Bank and in one day the Board would agree to lend him the money without security or anything. The small man has all the red tape and the bank at 12%. I said that I might be shadow Minister of Agriculture but I was not going to let \$100 put me in debt of \$1,100. That is the position in which the man finds himself and I think the Government must now tell the people what its policy is in regard to the small man because it is no use beating around the bush and shouting that they are now supporting agriculture, they are supporting the magnates, not the small man. The small man must understand that there is no room for him in the inn and he must go outside and take the cold. That is exactly what is happening.

I am sorry for those who have to overlook the BMC because I predict that within a year from today the BMC will find itself back in debt, because if it has to perform its role in the society of purchasing from the producer at one price and selling at a lesser price somebody has to provide the money, it has to come from somewhere, and if you do not get it through the Government you have to go back to the banks and the 12% will again eat out the profits and they will find themselves back in the same position as they are today. The token gesture is like the story which is going around the world now. Two people, one in the United States and one in England, have serious brain damage and artificial machines are keeping them breathing but they are not living, they are clinically dead. I say that the BMC will be clinically dead after today. May God rest their souls in peace.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, I subscribe to the view of the hon. member for St. Joseph in this respect, that the sum asked for today to refinance the Barbados Marketing Corporation is really going to prove little more than a drop in the bucket to what the financial demands of

that institution will call for as we go along. The Hon. Leader of the House in introducing this resolution spent some time giving us breakdown as to how the BMC intends to disperse with the greater part of the \$3.1 million asked for today, but what would have been of far more importance to us is this, if the Minister had set himself the task of going on to explain to us the number of small farmers, the number of medium size farmers and the number of big farmers that the BMC would be finding itself having to contract with in the year or two years ahead and letting us have an idea as to what would be the financial demands of this institution to meet those contracts if those farmers are to feel within themselves that they have a purpose plus a guarantee about what they are going to produce. It is rather unfortunate for the BMC to find itself thinking of a conspiracy between some of the Ministry of Agriculture and some of the Ministry of Trade.

1.26 p.m.

There is no denying the fact that there are some people attached to the Ministry of Agriculture today who are not prepared to put everything into the task of advising farmers how, when and what to produce because when that is done and the B.M.C. appears to be making any progress all the credit would go to the Ministry of Trade. You will find, Mr. Chairman, that there is a definite conspiracy between some of the officers in the Ministry of Agriculture and others in the Ministry of Trade. Likewise, the B.M.C. is also caught up in a whirlpool of a greater conspiracy between the trading magnates in this community. It cannot be denied that they are standing by with their millions of dollars and poking fun at the B.M.C., which has only half-cents and pennies in the hugh competitive world with them.

One, therefore, has to look at the situation in this light. I have advocated for a very long time in this Honourable House that the B.M.C. ought to be performing an entirely different role to that which it now finds itself swamped. The B.M.C. still lacks a great measure of certain expertise. That being the case, no farmer is today seeking advice from the B.M.C. as to what he must plant, what he must not plant, and when he must reap and so on. On the contrary, the B.M.C. finds itself being told by farmers: "I will be having this and that at a particular time." and the B.M.C. has to find money to accommodate all of these situations. We are saying that the B.M.C. ought to be in a position to call the tune. If the Government want the B.M.C. to perform a proper role, they

will have to give the B.M.C. money plus the expertise with which to re-establish its image in the farming community in which we live. There is still a feeling of uncertainty in the bosoms of some farmers that, after they have produced their goods, the B.M.C. is not sufficiently financially equipped to pay them cash for what they produce. We have had experiences of this.

Mr. Chairman, any farmer, who wants to produce things for the benefit of the community, must be able to embark on his task with a certain measure of confidence. He must know that the B.M.C. will be able to pay him cash for what he produces. Mark you, Mr. Chairman, the B.M.C. does not offer fertiliser or any of the other agricultural implements to the farmer. It would mean, therefore, that when the farmer has to face the various counters to seek credit to get his produce to marketing stage, at that stage he is already in a fair measure of debt and the persons to whom he owes these varying sums of money can make better calculations as to what a 1-acre or a 2-acre plot of land can produce than he can. That is the position in which we are placed in referring to the B.M.C. I would like to see the B.M.C. so established as to be able to command the confidence of every farmer in our community.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to make mention of the B.M.C.'s depot in my constituency in St. Peter. The B.M.C. has embarked on a first-class scheme by establishing various depots in the country, and I feel that the Government should give the B.M.C. the type of support that it deserves in this field. The Government should bow its head in shame to find that ever since 1969 this Honourable House has been voting money repeatedly, year after year, to establish a Public Market in Speightstown, and the B.M.C. is now renting a private property in Speightstown, and not at a peppercorn rent. The B.M.C. is paying rent for a building which cannot accommodate the number of customers who are trying to take advantage of what is sold there.

While the B.M.C. is doing a good job by establishing these depots at various points in the country, it cannot make huge profits because of the high rent involved and the limited accommodation afforded to the customers. The limited accommodation creates a hardship on the people who would like to spend money with the B.M.C. All of these things need some measure of review, if the B.M.C. is to embark on any meaningful scheme and show itself as a worthwhile organisation doing something to

encourage the production of poultry, or the production of meat products, in this community.

Mr. Chairman, we have learnt from the Leader of the House that there are many avenues through which the B.M.C. has been losing money. I believe that it is the fear of the Opposition that has taught the Leader of the House to do what he has done today.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. It is only a question of honesty and upbringing that caused me to do what I think was fair, right and equitable.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, I still repeat that I believe it is the fear the Leader of the House holds for the Opposition that has driven him to admit the various areas in which the B.M.C. has made these losses. This is something commendable on the part of the Leader of the House to come here and admit certain things before having to be questioned by members of the House. He tells us that in this respect the B.M.C. had losses to the tune of \$76,000 through importations in the Port, and being unable to take out the goods from time to time. He has told us that borrowing money involved high interest rates. Who is responsible for controlling these high interest rates in this country? Where money is being loaned to the B.M.C., to you, or to me, Mr. Chairman, who has the overall control over such a situation? In other words, who has control over the spending and interest rates in this country? We do not have to go far for the answer.

1.35 p.m.

The very Government that permits the B.M.C. to be having to borrow at these tremendous interest rates is the same Government that will take the money and put into the commercial banks for the commercial banks to lend the B.M.C. at these high interest rates. Now tell me, Mr. Chairman, what sense is this? Imagine, the Government is going to lend out money; it lends money to the banks at this high interest rate and then the commercial banks lend to the B.M.C. at high interest rates. (Aside) Mr. Chairman, it has been said that the B.M.C. might lend the money and the Government would not get back what it wants. That is not the point at issue. In other words, what we are submitting is that the affairs of the B.M.C. have to be properly administered. They have to be administered in a way the Leader of the House has tried to introduce this Resolution — with a high sense of honesty about the whole matter.

However, Mr. Chairman, I am told the cash register system at the B.M.C. is one avenue through which thousands of dollars can be lost and might have been lost, and we would not wish to see this come about, but this is a matter that the administration should make a sudden change into. Immediately after you have made up your totals let us see what is taking place in this institution. (*Aside*) Mr. Chairman, we will hear that there is a lot of trick in trade, and, one has to give an ear to all this.

Mr. Chairman, we believe that the B.M.C., well financed, well managed and equipped with the expertise that such an organization should have would present itself before the farming public and the community in general as an institution with which to reckon in this community, but this half-way measure of the Government is only bailing out the B.M.C. today to be behind bars again in another two or three months. It is absolutely necessary for the Government to come before this House with provision for the B.M.C. for a five year trading period and give us the understanding as to what it would take in truth and in fact to finance this institution annually or as demands would be made from time to time over this five-year period. It means that the B.M.C. would be able to offer the farmers a guarantee over a period of time because they would know how they stand with the farmers. It may be then that the farmer will in turn be able to know what he can market over the period because he will be able to guarantee any credits that he may have from anybody anywhere and then this institution would be established in the way we should have it.

Mr. Chairman, the whole financing of the B.M.C. calls for a higher examination than the Government is prepared to put in at this time. It calls for greater scrutiny than the Government is prepared to give to this institution at this time. We have heard it said that the B.M.C. has been the saviour of the small farmer, and the like. There is no such truth of all this. Neither the poultry industry nor the farmer has been saved in this country. The production of our vegetables has not really and truly been embarked upon with any real planning and any large scale manner as one would have it or could expect to have it, so as to be able to guarantee a constant supply for the B.M.C. to meet its commitments to the hotels or other institutions, but we find that the B.M.C. has to buy from the farmers and then turn around and compete with those same farmers who are making supplies to the institutions.

I suggest that the whole system of marketing and distribution in the B.M.C. calls for a drastic overhaul immediately and let the institution be well financed to the tune that it can play its meaningful role in the farming community such as ours and operate for the benefit of all concerned. It would be good if the Government could see the wisdom of trying to avoid personality conflict between the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture; all these should be got rid of and this institution must be financed to the tune that it can play its proper role in this community so that the community can have confidence in this institution.

Mr. FORDE: Before the Minister replies, there is one point I would like to draw to the attention of this Committee; I would like to emphasize the point I have made continuously over the last four years in this House. It is simply this. It is not very good financing to set up an enterprise of a commercial nature if the equity in that enterprise cannot carry the finance for which the enterprise was set up. This is a basic consideration of economics.

In 1961 the Labour Party having passed a Resolution, unfortunately lost the Government. 1.45 p.m.

The Democratic Labour Party took over, and its method of financing the Barbados Marketing Corporation was by a very low equity capital and high borrowings so that debt liability was very heavy. I think that if anybody looks at the ratio of equity to debt, it was very unfavourable from the beginning; and the result of this has been that during the years the corporation could not service its debt, and whatever might have been the profit on a debt equity base was completely wiped out.

Parliament today is faced with the position that in actual fact in 14 years we would have been contributing over seven point something million dollars in all by way of equity towards this corporation. This is a very serious criticism of the Ministry of Finance, but I do not like to escape from facing the Prime Minister when he makes a mistake. He has either got very bad advice on financing the corporation from the beginning, or if he got the correct advice he did not follow it; but one must face these facts.

We have heard a lot of talk about the BMC. They have made mistakes, but its financing base was wrong. I join with other hon. members in saying that I do not believe that with that legacy behind us we should shirk the duty now of

putting it on a proper footing. I would have liked to have seen us giving them the money that they really want and that they asked for to begin the task anew and do it.

To me this is a simple Resolution. The Opposition is going to vote for the Resolution. We regret that we have had to give \$7 million in 14 years; but that is the position. There is one other simple point that I want to make. I am astounded that one Government Department should allow the public of Barbados to be saddled with \$7.6 thousand because they are going to stick rigidly to what they call the rules.

If the BMC was short of cash, and the commercial bank was not responding to its needs, I believe that the Port Department was in duty bound to go to its Minister and apprise him of the facts. I will bet that the Minister was not apprised of these facts or that it was not said to him that if necessary we should get Cabinet clearance or Parliamentary clearance in this particular position so that we can get a guarantee somewhere that the Port Authority would be paid.

Civil Servants must be very conscious of this. It is pointless their sitting down there and telling me that you cannot clear goods out of the Port. I very sincerely regret that this type of incident is still occurring in the functioning between Government Departments.

I must also state a fact that I know, because at one stage I was on the Board of the BMC. Too frequently a lot of the debts owed to the Corporation are owed by some Government Departments themselves; and they are loath to pay their own quasi governmental authority, and will pay other people first.

Now, there can be no reason, rhyme or logic in that, because what happens eventually is that you come back to the Legislature and we are eating up taxes in this country. So I would like to plead that you should get more co-operation between the administration where borrowing is concerned with a corporation such as this.

I am not one of those who subscribe to the view of ELC that the realm of trade is a sacred cow reserved only for those who are in private enterprise. I do not believe so. I believe that there are times when the Government must intervene actively in the economy; and I believe that the policy on trade in this respect must be broadened.

I would hate to see the Government intervene in such a way as would automatically

disqualify an importer in private enterprise from having a fair chance; but I cannot subscribe to ELC's views that in the realm of trade the sole importer must be the importer in private enterprise. If the BMC is able to find cheaper sources of import than at present are being found, and if it is a better unit of operation than existing units, then of course it should be preferred.

I want to speak very shortly about the relationship between Ministries. It was at the beginning of 1971 that the decision was taken to move the Marketing Corporation from under the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Trade. I think it is true to say that we have now got four years of historical performance of the Marketing Corporation under a different Ministry.

I am going to be objective about this. It would appear, regardless of who is the Minister, that the type of expertise that you need in order to better manage the competing interests involved in this exercise should not be centralised in one Ministry. I believe that the Government should do a bit of research on this. I agree that there is a fear that the marketing aspects of it may be so overwhelming that the farming aspect of it may suffer; and that there may be competing forces in the Minister. It looks to me that in the context of the strategy being planned for the Corporation now and in the foreseeable future, that it is therefore better that this Corporation should be sandwiched with the Ministry of Agriculture, and if possible, as I think my friend has said, with a Ministry of Food, and I would say too Consumer Affairs.

I would hope that where this organisation is concerned we could see whether or not we cannot stop all the problems that are occurring. I would like to say that the Opposition regrets that it has again to bail out the Barbados Marketing Corporation out of public funds; but the Government must let this be a lesson to it; and not only this Government but any succeeding Government.

1.55 p.m.

If it is going to go into the commercial field, it cannot go into the commercial field like a beggar, because it is obviously going into a competitive world, and it must recognise therefore that its instrument of policy must have the means of acting, and not acting 14 years late, but acting from the very first year of operation. This exercise is a good one to teach all of us who are new to business methods what is involved, and I hope that the Civil Servants who operate Government Departments will show a bit more

consideration for the quasi-Government Departments. It is also an educational lesson in this respect; it is about time we teach our people what happens to be good business management. I believe that you, Mr. Chairman, with your years of experience has acquired that. You cannot run a business at a loss if you are in private enterprise, because you will become insolvent, and there is no reason why Government enterprise should be run at a loss. I hear the argument being advanced very frequently that in private enterprise there is the availability of manpower at top management range, yet I have seen some of the top management range of the Civil Service go into private enterprise and it continues to make a profit. Why must Civil Servants then believe that if they stay in the Government Departments that the business can always come back to the House for more and more capital? Something is wrong somewhere. If it means a re-orientation on the educational process to make our people from the first day of schooling aware of what is good business management, then we must face that fact and face it as soon as possible.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, before you put the question, I would like to.....

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member would give way, I beg to move that Your Honour do now report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended for one hour, until 3.00 p.m.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

On Resumption:

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed. When this sitting was suspended, the

House was in Committee of Supply. To that it automatically reverts.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply. Mr. LOWE took the Chair.

Resumption of Resolution for the sum of \$3,150,000.

Hon. A. MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, I would like to reply to some of the comments made by the various speakers on this Resolution for re-financing the Barbados Marketing Corporation. This is purely a financial matter but you have heard from the various comments of the shortcomings of the Barbados Marketing Corporation that there are really not criticisms on the production policy of the Ministry of Agriculture. You will observe from the nature of the criticism that the Pork industry cannot find an outlet nor can the poultry industry find an outlet, and there is a glut of poultry. Now this has always been the work of the Ministry of Agriculture which is charged with the jurisdiction of production in the agricultural sector, and we are satisfied that we have been able to motivate and stimulate producers into producing products which Barbadians will need to consume.

You will remember some years ago in this very Chamber we heard the foreboding of not having a single pig in Barbados in another six months or so. I am happy today that we are now faced with the situation where we have sufficient pork as to cause us concern in the area of marketing. This did not come about just by chance, and our policy has been very much geared to helping the small farmer, and I can assure you, Sir, that the Agricultural Credit Bank has been very instrumental by its lending policies by making loans to pig farmers for the rapid building back up of the pig industry.

I have myself gone around the Island and visited no less than 25 producers who have all been financed by the Agricultural Credit Bank and stimulated in the area of production, and we are satisfied that production has come back up and we expect if this trend continues that probably in another six months or at most a year we would reach the kind of stage which would make us almost self-sufficient in our fresh pork requirements in this country. Even though we are committed to a pork-processing plant and the Government is in agreement by giving approval in principle, we have delayed the establishment because we have been working along the lines that we would need almost 30,000 live pigs for our fresh pork market as well as another 30,000

if we are going to enter upon pork processing. We are half way or perhaps more than half way past the stage to support our fresh pork market. We have given assistance and all the agricultural and technical know-how to private enterprise. As you will have observed, this very month there was a ground breaking ceremony at Edgecliffe in the area of agro-industries, and I also intimated to the Managing Director that he should provide some kind of slaughter facilities in that development to be able to take a minimum number of pigs in the initial stage. So we have been consistent in our motivation. We have produced certain patterns in agricultural development despite the various constraints we have encountered in arriving at a policy for agricultural development, and we are geared at this stage to meaningful production in this country; but the major and biggest constraint has always been the marketing of our agricultural products. It is in this respect that I give very strong support to any move by Government for the refinancing of the Barbados Marketing Corporation.

3.05 p.m.

If I may give a history of the introduction of the BMC in the role of agricultural marketing and the original intention for the setting up of such an institution, it was actually set up to serve as a viable instrument in the agricultural diversification process. It was established in the Ministry of Agriculture by Act of Parliament in the year 1961 but it began its operations some time in the year 1963. At that time, Sir, the structure of agricultural production in this country was such that 80% of the total vegetable production was on farms less than one acre in size, and it was considered then that the storage and other facilities established at the BMC at the time were adequate to handle the commodities then produced. Our production output has now outgrown these facilities and we are only considering the rather big constraint of marketing because agricultural production has been on the increase, and that is the area which I deal with.

The functions as stated in the 1961 Act under which we now operate were -

- (a) to stimulate, facilitate and improve the production, marketing and processing of produce in the Island, particularly for the benefit of the producer;

note that it is for the benefit of the producer,

- (b) to secure the most favourable arrangements for the purchase, handling, transportation, exportation,

shipping, marketing and sale of produce whether in the Island or out of the Island and in particular to assist agricultural and fishery cooperative societies to dispose of their produce to the best advantage; and

- (c) to secure the most favourable arrangements in the Island and out of the Island for the storage of produce and for the storage of such other matter or thing as the Corporation may think fit.

Today in the year 1975 I and my officers in the Ministry would like to interpret agricultural marketing policy as follows. We would like to see, and we have given these views to the Ministry of Trade, we have supported any efforts to refinance the BMC because we feel it should be done in a more concrete manner for the needs of the farmer in this country, and we should provide producers with the available outlets for their produce at a price which reflects the production costs incurred by reasonably efficient producers and give them an adequate return having regard for their production needs. They also seek to develop a coordinated approach to agricultural production and marketing so that marketing can provide strong incentives for increases in agricultural production. It is further to safeguard the interest of consumers by ensuring that as far as possible adequate supplies of produce of acceptable quality are available at all times. In other words, Mr. Chairman, we in the Ministry of Agriculture see the BMC among other things performing the following functions:

- (1) to provide an assured market at guaranteed prices in fulfilment of Government's agricultural diversification policy;
- (2) to enter into contract with producers to produce specified qualities of commodities at determined economic guaranteed minimum prices;
- (3) to provide by collection and transportation greater storage, processing, selling and distribution functions; and
- (4) to provide market intelligence and information services.

It is in this area that we are now working very furiously and we are trying to provide for the first time the kind of efficiency geared for the marketing of such production.

We also had studies carried out in the area of marketing, and these studies have revealed that only 10% of the total agricultural produce is handled by the BMC. If BMC then is really to serve the purpose for which it was created and for which it was set up, that is, to facilitate agricultural diversification, it will have to play an even greater role in terms of the quality of agricultural produce it markets. The Ministry of Agriculture has started and will continue to support any effort aimed at improving the agricultural marketing system and upgrading the marketing facilities of the BMC. Under the aegis of our food production teams from FAO/UNDP we have recruited a marketing expert and a food technologist who together with the BMC and the Ministry are working out plans for the improvement of marketing facilities for farm produce.

I know that this preliminary resolution is the first state in an effort to make the BMC really competent to handle farm produce, and we support this initial attempt by Government. We know that they are working on other reports and that it is being looked into, by a committee of finance and agriculture personnel to get further financing for the Barbados Marketing Corporation. There are certain limitations as far as the managerial staff is concerned, and it was felt that before more money was put in the BMC we would like to have certain things straightened up with regard to staff, and when this report is ready, probably in another few months, we will have to come back eventually for more money for the BMC, because the whole object is to make it really functional to take off the produce from the farmers, which produce we are getting now in more increased quantities because of our productive policies in agriculture.

I would like to support the refinancing of BMC, and with the recapitalisation to the tune of \$3.1 million in the first instance I expect, Mr. Chairman, that new vigour in the Barbados Marketing Corporation in the marketing of agricultural products.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I shall not be very long. One thing with this Government is that we suffer from the fact that our progressive ideas for this country are very often circumscribed by our intention not to make the taxpayers of this country pay too much.
3.15 p.m.

We have started enterprises for the progressive development of Barbados and to bring modern ideas to Barbados, but our idea that we should not cause the taxpayers of this country to

pay the initial expense, capital or otherwise, has landed this Government in trouble. We endeavour, like C.B.C., to set up a Television Station and a Radio Station for the benefit of this country. We endeavour to set up a Marketing Corporation for the benefit of this country, but if we had sat down and studied the cost of the establishment of these two excellent progressive ideas, we would have caused the taxpayers then to pay the amount that was necessary. But being concerned, as a Government, not to put too great a burden on the people, we have established both of these Corporations giving them buildings and lands, but we have never initially given them the money to run them properly and we have relied on borrowing money from the bank to establish them. A.D.C., C.B.C., and B.M.C.

This was not done from a lack of knowledge of economics on the part of the Government. We have Economic Advisers; the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is an Economist. We may be wrong, but as a socialist Government this is our thinking: If we can establish something to run and meet the needs of the people without imposing a financial burden on them at the time of establishment we should do it. Perhaps if we set up any future enterprises for the interest of Barbadians, we should make them pay the initial, economic cost for the establishment. This is why this Resolution is before the House today.

When the B.M.C. was originally set up, at that time it should have cost the taxpayers more than it is costing them today. We gave them a building and certain privileges, but we did not give the Corporation the money which it needed at the time. We relied on bank loans with a lot of interest, and the whole financing of the B.M.C., A.D.C. and C.B.C. was based on not a wrong economic principle but, perhaps, on a principle which this Government considered should not be adopted because at that time it would have placed too heavy a financial burden on the taxpayers. That is what all the criticism is today.

Mr. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Hon. Minister must not put forward these non-economic theories. What he is saying is that instead of the B.M.C. costing the taxpayers \$X at that time, his Government is prepared for it to cost \$X plus \$50.00 today.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order!

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, all I am saying is that all the criticism that has been levelled against this Government, when we come to this Honourable House for money, whether for C.B.C., A.D.C., or B.M.C., has been based on

wrong initial financing when the taxpayers of this country should have been called upon to put proper money into the organisation apart from buildings and buying estates. We did not do that at the time because we were concerned with not putting a heavy burden on the taxpayers at the time of establishment.

Mr. Chairman, today nobody can say that C.B.C. and the Radio Station are wrong ideas. Nobody can say that the B.M.C. is a wrong idea. All the criticism you hear today is that we are asking for money for the first time to endeavour to put these statutory Corporations, established in good faith, established for the benefit of the farmers and all Barbadians, on a proper economic footing. That is what we have suffered from. If we were a different Government and we had made the people pay at the time when we were setting up C.B.C.; if we had made them pay at the time when we were setting up A.D.C. and give the Corporations proper working capital and proper money, we would never be harassed and abused and the public made to think that we are a bunch of non-economists who have not been able to see the future.

Mr. Chairman, this is one thing about politics. You try to help people today by not putting an economic burden on them tomorrow, and in the long run the Opposition will go through the country, as they did on other matters, and tell the people that we are a bunch of non-economists and asking for some \$3.1 million as if the Corporation initially was established on a proper, economic footing and it had lost \$3.1 million. As if the A.D.C. was established on a proper, financial footing and it had lost four point something million dollars. As if C.B.C. was established on a proper, financial footing and had lost \$2.5 million. We will learn after the election that, if the taxpayers are going to think and think economically, no corporation must, in future, be set up without proper financing and without asking the taxpayers, so long as it is in the interest of the masses of this country, to pay the bill for its establishment.

Mr. Chairman, I am amused, and this is something on which I must attack him. I understand the hon. member for St. Joseph is a member of the Poultry Association. At least the member for Christ Church West, when he gets up in this House, as he did last week, declares to this House his interest in anything. He explained that he was representing a family in something. I was out of the Chamber most of the time, but I have not heard him declare his interest and connection with the Poultry Association, which is now asking

the Government to stop bringing in cheap beef for the masses of this country. Do you know that the Poultry Association is asking the Government to stop bringing in this cheap beef because they cannot sell poultry? Any Government that falls for that deserves to be out of power!

Mr. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Certain lawyers like to seek information in order to get up and use it. But I have sat here and misled him in order to make him look foolish. (*Asides*) I deliberately misled him because I want him to note that I was not a member of the Poultry Association since last year. I misled him because I knew that he was asking me that question to get up and say something. If he would look at the Hansard before he came into this Chamber and when he was in the Other Chamber, he would realise that, even before there was a Poultry Association, I have been speaking on behalf of the agriculturists in this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order!

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, he was a duck farmer at one time. I do not know if ducks are not poultry. He was a big shot and President of the Poultry Association. I do not know whether they kicked him out or got rid of him. I know that, as a farmer, he still has their interest at heart. Can you believe that the Poultry Association are asking the Government not to import cheap beef because it is stopping poultry from coming in? But let us deal with the B.M.C. Mr. Chairman. I will not be long.

Mr. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I wonder whether the hon. member will look round on his side and tell us how many members over there are interested in agriculture? The Prime Minister, the hon. member for St. Andrew, the member for.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order!

Hon. F. G. SMITH: The Government has established the B.M.C. My Hon. Colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, has explained things and read from the Act showing the purposes of this Corporation. Anybody in Barbados today with a modicum of ability, who expects the Barbados Marketing Corporation, financed as it was and with the aims and functions which it has, to make profits should be in Jenkins.
3.25 p.m.

The Barbados Marketing Corporation, if you look at Chapter 255 you will see, that it is set up to assist farmers in marketing their produce, to

stimulate, facilitate and to improve the production, marketing and processing of produce in the Island particularly for the benefit of the producers. I do not have to go to (a), (b), (c) or (d). I am dealing with (1). The Marketing Corporation was never set up to make money for any Government. This Marketing Corporation takes in the plans of the Ministry of Agriculture, to encourage farmers to grow produce to try to feed the Island. A Corporation as this must necessarily run into problems.

We have had seven months of drought this year. Barbados' rainfall has been low for the last five years. The farmer has conceived subsection (a) to mean that if he has a good crop of carrots, a good crop of beets and cabbage he can go to the hotels, he can go to the supermarket and he can sell his first quality to them, but because the Marketing Corporation is set up to purchase, to facilitate, to improve, he can go down to the Marketing Corporation with the Z class and the Corporation must buy it; and the Marketing Corporation, they too conceive that they should assist farmers and because of this they have been buying the Z class while the A class has been going to the supermarkets and hotels. The Government does not mind this, but when the member for St. Joseph quarrels about subsidization of chicken, if they buy it at \$1.60 per pound and sell it to consumers at \$1.40, Bravo. Hail to the Marketing Corporation, because some poor housewife is still getting it at \$1.40 per pound. I do not quarrel with that...

Mr. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Sir. I wonder if the member would go on to explain where the B.M.C. is going to get the money from which it has lost via this method of subsidization.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: They are going to get it from the same taxpayers to whom it gives chicken at \$1.40 instead of \$1.80, but when we take off the price of chicken and decontrol chicken, chicken legs are at \$2.40. What are you going to do with these merchants? (*Aside*) If my time is nearly up I will stop.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes your time is up.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: However, I am saying today that the price we are paying for this Resolution is the fact — because the Government's policy is to assist the people of this country in getting cheaper food, because originally instead of making the taxpayers pay for the proper economic establishment of a corporation we were trying to be too stingy and

chinky, today whether it is the CBC, whether it is AMC, whether it is ADC or whether it is BMC we can hear the type of criticism we hear from the Opposition.

This money, Mr. Chairman, is money well spent in the interest of the people of Barbados. Anything you establish to compete with the merchants and people in town must run into criticism and, they have their Public Relations Officer. We are not saying that it is a paragon of virtue, that it is economically run or that it is the most efficient organisation, but the purpose, the intention and the Government's conception of it are ideal and nothing should hinder the granting of this money to put it on — — at least not a proper; we have plans; BMC is going to pay, even before the next election, I hope; but after we get back in power this BMC is going to play a part in of agro-industry, in the development of agriculture in this country, that those who survive from the Opposition will not recognise.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, you know these organizations which are named in Shakers, that get in the power? That is what he is talking like.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely no point.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I listened with great interest to the great apologist of the Democratic Labour Party assuming a new role now as apologist on behalf of the Barbados Marketing Corporation. It seems rather strange that at this stage the hon. member for St. Michael South Central has finally discovered the Government's economic mismanagement in setting up institutions and not having them capitalized properly, because when he says that the Government is trying to save the taxpayers money, in the long run we see that they are not in fact saving the taxpayers money but what is happening is that the Government's economic mismanagement is causing the taxpayers a great deal more money than if the particular corporation was properly established.

It is at least a welcomed sign to hear from the member that he, if not the rest of the Government, has discovered that the Government's policy is bad in this respect. This may be due to the fact that the Government does not like to be frank to the taxpayers of this country. I believe if it was the question of voting money for the Marketing Corporation if the purpose of that was to ensure that the corporation is going to function efficiently and also to ensure that it is going to play an effective role in keeping down the cost of living where possible and reducing other aspects, then no one

In this country would begrudge or criticise the Government for voting money for any corporation or indeed the Marketing Corporation, but we find that the Government is not frank in this respect, and as result of this we are now feeling the effects of this mismanagement.

I am one of those who believe that the idea of using the Marketing Corporation as a retail outlet is one that needs to be seriously considered because I do not believe that at this stage the function of the Marketing Corporation should be used for purposes of retail business. I feel and I agree that it should be an instrument of commercial policy but I would have thought that the method in which it could be used as an instrument of commercial policy would be in respect of the heavy importation of foodstuff that we now bring into this country every year.

I would have thought that the Government would seriously look at the Marketing Corporation and at its functions in relation to the importation of foodstuffs. I see here in one of the reports that there is a special time of the year when things like onions and cauliflower and carrots are in glut in Barbados, and that the Barbados Marketing Corporation becomes the sole importer of these foodstuffs into Barbados; but I think that if the Corporation is going to be used as an effective instrument of commercial policy the Government must seriously look at the Marketing Corporation and look at it in relation to the importation of foodstuff into Barbados because the present system whereby the merchants in Bridgetown are left and given the right, whether it is of right or under licence, to bring certain food stuffs into Barbados it is not in the interest of these merchants to ensure that while bringing in the cheapest goods possible, yet to maintain at the same time, quality. It is not in the interest of the merchants to see this; and this is why this party has on numerous occasions said that the overseas missions should be made more effective use of in relation to trade in Barbados, by seeing what could be obtained at the best possible prices.

3.35 p.m.

The merchants in Bridgetown have an interest in this because if something comes into this country and they get a certain mark up on it, it is in their interest to see that they continue to bring in the most expensive items possible because the higher their percentage will be. So, when faced with the problem of the taste of people and the fact that people in Barbados tend to buy brand names — they will buy Elite rather than buying some other name which is cheaper,

and they will pay 50 cents or 60 cents more for something that is coming in. That is the problem that we are facing in Barbados. People will continue to buy brand names and the merchants in this country will continue to bring them in because in the long run the merchants of this country are not concerned with seeing the cost of living kept to a sensible level.

This is where the BMC could play a very effective role. It is time that the Government had a source by which they could investigate sources from which they could buy things not produced in Barbados, things which they could buy at more reasonable prices for the country as a whole. Any innovation of this sort will not come from the merchants because they do not have the interest in seeing that the cost of living is kept in check. They will buy from the agents overseas a particular article irrespective of the fact that you could get the same article coming from a different country at a cheaper price.

That is where the BMC can come into play. That is where the Government could use it as an effective instrument of commercial policy.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (CURRENT) 1975-76 NO. 12

A Resolution for the sum of \$24,480 was called.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution is to supplement Head 6(3) Electoral Office, Item 2 — Other Personal Emoluments in the sum of \$14,400 for personal emoluments, and Item 3 — Travel and Subsistence in the sum of \$10,080.

The Addendum set out the purposes for which this money is required. The position is simply that the personal emoluments and travelling allowances paid to the Registering Officers are \$100 a month and \$40 a month respectively. This rate of payment came into operation on the 21st October, 1971. Owing to the increase in the cost of living and the revision of salaries etc. the cost has increased. So this Resolution is a supplementary in order to pay increased salaries to Registering Officers.

There will be a 25 to 30 per cent increase in the salaries for these part time employees. Most of the employees also receive annual increments.

The rate of travelling allowance payable to these employees has been increased from 42 cents for the first 200 miles to 60 cents for the same mileage with effect from the 1st July, 1974.

In the case of the photographers, they are paid so much per head, but it is felt that as in the case of the Registering Officers, they do a great deal of work and should be put on a fixed salary and paid no less than clerical officers in the Government Service who receive a commencement pay of \$200 a month. This will mean that the official photographers will be paid now at \$200 a month.

This means that the remuneration and travelling allowance payable to Registering officers will be increased with effect from 1st July, 1974 and (b) that official photographers on the staff of the Electoral Office will be remunerated at a rate of \$200 a month instead of at a rate per photograph taken.

I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

Mr. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I would have expected that the Leader of the House would have been in a position to announce the election date in introducing this Resolution. (*Aside: We are coming like a thief in the night*) There is no point coming like a thief in the night because there is nothing to steal this time.

Seriously, Sir, I would like to talk a little bit about some of the matters that I have drawn to this committee's attention about a year ago and which have still not yet been attended to.

There has been an increase no doubt in the frequency of registrations in various centres. I think that a look will reveal that each centre does not necessarily get the same attention as the other. From what has been happening so far I think that there is still a need for a new enumeration. I am really not too happy about the situation where people have transferred from one area to another for one thing, and I think that people on the Christ Church voting list are sometimes registered for St. Michael South. I am not sure whether it is a benefit to him or if at sometimes it is to my disadvantage. I am not quite sure.

3.45 p.m.

I think it is not quite right that the obligation should be placed on the sitting or

potential member to have to be continually looking for these points and bringing them to the attention of the electoral office. Also, there is a division on a boundary line, it is a difficult decision for the person registering himself to be quite sure where he is. This has been coming to my attention. I am a person who is very conscious of electoral roles. They are after all the guiding beacons of our future political progress, and I have been looking recently very closely at the electoral roles for matters such as this.

Another thing is happening. I am sure that always people who have left the Island should have their registration discontinued after a period of time as they are no longer residents, and some of the lists still contain the names of such persons, and I should also like to ask whether in some of the constituencies the registering officer could not find other centres to register. For instance, in Christ Church West the chief centre for registration is at the St. Matthias' Boys' School, but this is not always convenient to the people in Bonnetts, Forde Road, Clapham and that area, and I think it should be possible to find some neutral centre in an area such as this for the convenience of allowing residents in that area not to be inconvenienced.

The other thing is that the younger people are not coming on to the role as quickly as they ought to, and I would certainly like the word to go forth that it is very vital that people who have the right at law to vote should get themselves registered regardless of what political conviction they have. I think the citizen ought to take part in the electoral process as much as possible. Within the next couple of weeks this vote that we are passing here today might assume a little greater significance than it may have been looked at at the moment as a mere routine measure. I am not one of those who consider it a routine measure at all. To me it is a testing of the pulse of the political process, and I am anxious to pass it too and to let all those registering officers know that the Opposition does not object to them getting paid adequately, but we want them also to be quite fair in their process, so that at least everybody is on the register, leaving it to them on the day of reckoning to decide how they are going to vote. I have no problem in my area. I am hoping to see any of the new residents who have gone on to the role and to see where they really live. That is an important point because under the present system of registration although there are penalties under the Act for people who misuse the Act itself, anybody who is vigilant in politics must ensure that people who are putting themselves automatically on the list actually live where they say they do, and that is my concern

certainly in my constituency. I do not know anybody else, but I am looking at the list of those who have registered since the last election up to now, and I give people the warning that if they get on that list and do not live in that area what is the position. You must warn seriously against it so that people know the law. I am not saying it has happened, but there is a danger which I would ask the registering officer to keep his eyes out for in such circumstances which may occur from time to time.

Mr. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, any time you see this Government come into this Chamber and begin to look at the electoral office, one can say that elections are around the corner. The old proverb that there is never smoke without fire always holds true. I remember early in 1971 the Government came to this Chamber and you, Mr. Chairman, will remember that we debated the electoral office. We spoke about the creation of an Electoral and Boundaries Commission, and we were told at the time that we had to rush certain amendments through the House because the computer in Barbados had broke down and in order for the list to be made up it would have to go abroad. The Act was amended to absolve the Chief Registering Officer from any omissions or commission of acts, etc. which might occur. I said then that the Government was putting on its pads against the incident which took place in Jamaica when the Chief Electoral Officer was sued by persons who had gone and registered and whose names did not appear on the final electoral role, and I was assured this was not the case. But within two weeks of that amendment going through the House, a most unusual thing happened. One day a postman delivered to my house a copy of the Act which deals with elections and I believe members of this Chamber were pleasantly surprised to see the Government being so gratuitous and courteous to them, and the next week elections were called. Two weeks after that we found that a number of persons who had registration cards had turned up at the polls, but they were called but not chosen; their names were not there, and you could not sue the Chief Electoral Officer at all. You had been disenfranchised but you had no redress because the Act had taken care of that. Where there is smoke, there is fire. (Hon. F. G. SMITH: That did not defeat you.) You see Mr. Know-all of the Democratic Labour Party is over there making asides. I would like him to be honest enough....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like the hon. member to adhere to Standing Order No. 33(6).

Mr. BOLDEN: Which hon. member, Sir? I am speaking.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I could not be speaking to the hon. member who is on his feet.

Mr. BOLDEN: You know you have some very unmannerly people in this Chamber. They like to sit down and keep unnecessary noise.

Again, Mr. Chairman, we have had instances of electoral officers who are known and declared supporters of the Government in power who have done everything to frustrate the persons who are duly registered from exercising their votes. I say here and now in my particular constituency despite all the obstacles which have been placed in the way of voters, they have not been able to frustrate the wishes of the people of that constituency. It is the marginal seats that make or break a Government. Any student of political science will tell you that every party that enters elections has got secured constituencies where they can bank 100 per cent on the outcome. It is the marginal seats that make or break a political party; the marginal seats create or destroy a Government, and these are the seats in which the enumerators and electoral officers are most vicious in their operations.

3.55 p.m.

I believe in paying people for the work they do. I also believe that it is time for the Government to create an electoral and boundaries commission which should be impartial and be responsible only to Parliament or the Courts. It should not be the right of any Government to wait until the last minute to decide to re-arrange boundary lines or to decide when registration of voters should take place. These are things which should be set down, they should be part of the Constitution that everybody would know that a boundaries commission is going to operate and that electoral officers are capable of carrying out the wishes of the commission. I speak specifically of the St. Joseph constituency. I have said over and over again that St. Joseph, St. Andrew and certain parts of St. Thomas fall in a special category because of the terrain. If you set up a registration office in the Sugar Hill area you are not going to get anybody coming from Bathsheba because there is no transportation and with the terrain as it is, it is humanly impossible and it is asking a lot of a person who has a right to vote to go into that area to be registered. There should be specific times for registering officers to go through the entire country to bring on to the electoral rolls those persons who qualify by entering the specific districts. The Government should consider this not at a moment before the election, this is something which should be an ongoing process

of developing the political awareness of the people in this country.

I believe in the system where every man who is eligible to vote should be made to cast his vote. I believe that like in Venezuela if you do not vote you have committed a criminal offence. A few days ago a man came to me ridiculing the Opposition and asking me what we were doing. I told him that most of them had voted for the DLP and that now things are getting hard they were complaining to us and he told me that he did not vote at all. I told him to shut his mouth because he is a non-human and he had no right to complain because he did not participate in the formation of a Government and as a result he had no voice. I want it to go down in history that I believe every person who comes of age should be on the electoral roll and if they do not vote they would have committed a criminal offence for which they should be punished. I do not believe in people who sit on the fence supporting neither A nor B but then crying out at the outcome. If you believe in a Democratic Government, if you believe in the two party system, it means that you must vote for one or the other or for any party that seeks the Government. You cannot expect people like me, my colleagues here and my colleagues there to take the night dew and the insults and then you get on a telephone and tell us what to say or do. I do not believe in that. There are a lot of people who should be in politics today but they do not seem to realise that they are part and parcel of this community, but they want to sit on the fence.

I believe that Government has a duty to set the pattern, create an electoral and boundaries commission, give them the right to review the register every five, six or seven years, whatever is an appropriate time, put a charter upon them that every man who is of voting age should be registered and should be issued with the appropriate document to cast his vote. Bring back into the law the liability of the Chief Returning Officer if he or his officers fail to register a person who comes of age, and at the same time bring in the penalty for those who fail to cast their votes, because they are like parasites, living upon the others. They want somebody else to go out and fight their battles. I do not believe in wars, I do not believe in military service, but until you get a system where the kings, the queens and the generals go out to the front this will continue. I do not believe in anybody staying in an office and sending me out to battle, and therefore if the voters in this country want to get a

Government let us all participate in making a Government. I do not deny that electoral officers should be paid, but at the same time let them know that they have a duty to carry out the letter of the law, and bring back the punishment which should be attached if they fail to carry it out honourably. That is my suggestion.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I shall not be long. Nothing that this Government did in 1971 was responsible for the almost total annihilation of the Opposition, the people of this country realised the quality of this Government and voted for them in 1971 as we anticipate they will vote for us when the election comes. This has nothing to do with the election, this is only to pay people because the rates have gone up. You have agreed to give an increase in salary and an increase in travelling and the hon. member for St. Joseph can interpret it as an election round the corner. The election can come as a thief in the night. The Leader of the Opposition said that his Party is ready, the Government will be ready and then the people will realise who are working and have worked for the last 15 years in their best interests, and I have no doubt whatsoever, Mr. Chairman, that this Government will return. I cannot tell you about the numbers, I am not predicting, they are the predictors, they can predict. I know that when the crunch comes the people of this country are intelligent enough to understand who have been working in their best interests for the last 15 years and who have brought Barbados to the stage where it is almost the admiration of the entire world.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, this is not a matter of any controversy and for that reason I will be very brief, but I think I could make a small contribution. There were a few things said here this afternoon which give the wrong impression of what the law is. In 1971, being then the Minister in charge of the elections, I had a lot to do with the establishing of the Representation of the People Act, 1971, and that Act specifically provides for registration, but there is a loophole in the Act. 4.05 p.m.

He can get himself registered; it also places responsibility on the head of the household. In other words, it places responsibility on two different sources: on the person to be registered, and on the head of the household to make sure that those people are registered. The loophole in the Act to which I have referred is that the Act did not at the same time impose a sanction on those persons who did not carry

out these things. (*Asides.*) Never at any time was registration made compulsory to the extent that if one did not register, it would be a criminal offence. You cannot remove something that never existed. It did not exist at any time.

Mr. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has misunderstood what I have said.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what has the hon. member risen?

Mr. BOLDEN: On a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Allow me to hear it, please. I will listen now to the point of order.

Mr. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member does not understand what I have said. I said that the Representation of the People Act, 1971, removed the liability on the Chief Returning Officer which was in the previous Act which it superseded.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order!

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am stating, Mr. Chairman, that there was no penalty for not registering at any time in Barbados. Never at any time in Barbados, Mr. Chairman, was there a penalty on persons for refusing to register. The penalty was placed on those enumerators, or on the registering officers who did not carry out a registration when requested to do so by a person who was entitled to be registered, but what I am talking about now is something different. I am talking about the individual himself. I am talking about compulsory registration now in the sense that every person who has attained the age of 18 years is entitled to register, and the Act makes it compulsory. What the Act does not do, and what, perhaps, the Act should do is to make it compulsory that every person, who is of registrable age, should get himself registered.

Mr. Chairman, what is also not generally known is that the Act provides for, let us say, even if a person is removed from one constituency to another — there is not a single register. There are 24 different registers and not an Island-wide register. When one is on the register for St. Lucy, one is registered in the parish of St. Lucy. If the same person goes to live in St. Peter, he will have to transfer registration all over again. The Act provides for a period of 90 days after a person has taken up a new residence for that person to get himself registered. These are things that are, probably, not known and, for the sake of persons who

are not aware of these things and for the sake of persons who might be listening, I thought I should set the record straight only in this regard.

The question that the Resolution for the sum of \$24,480 do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

THE RESOLUTION FOR THE SUM OF \$118,000

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1975-76 No. 15

Hon. C. E. TALMA: The next Resolution we propose dealing with, Mr. Chairman, is a Resolution to grant the sum of one hundred and eighteen thousand dollars from the Consolidated Fund and place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1975-76 Part I — Current. This will be dealt with by the Hon. Minister of Education, who has asked for leave to deal with this in all its stages today.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I spoke to the first member of the Opposition I saw, and explained to him that I was seeking leave to deal with this Resolution in all its stages. Now, School Meals is an accepted fact in this country, and the Government is endeavouring to extend this Scheme as far as possible. As a matter of fact, only this morning I received the final plans for a new School Meals Centre at Lancaster, St. James, and I hope in the next two weeks to start fixing that up so that by April next year I can feed another 5,000 children.

I must say that, in my tours of Primary Schools, I am very heartened by the fact that over 90% of the children are availing themselves of this facility. Those schools that have School Meals are enjoying the meals. I am endeavouring to up-date all the Centres to make them conform to the Public Health Regulations, and I am up-dating the Centres of the Primary Schools to conform to the standards with fly-netting, etc. I must say that my experience in touring the Primary Schools is, in a way, a good thing. I am learning a lot; I am really seeing the problems in primary education, and primary education is very dear to my heart. I am a product of primary education, and I think the mere fact that I am standing here today as Minister of Education is to a large extent due to the grounding I had in primary education.

What worries me is that when I took over, some of the vehicles in the system were very old and costing a considerable amount to repair. This resulted in school meals arriving at schools rather late. (*Asides.*) I have a list here. Some were from 1967, 1969, 1971 and 1973. Mr. Chairman, I am satisfied that if School Meals arrive at a school late, it means that children are losing instruction, the teachers themselves are suffering and cannot correct exercise books, or even get their lunch in some cases. As a matter of fact, last Saturday at a meeting of the Ministry with the Barbados Union of Teachers, I even went this far to suggest that we add a half hour to lunch time and add it on after school so that the children cannot lose instruction. Now, if a child loses half an hour a day in his Primary School life and you add that up five days a week over a period of five years, you can see how many teaching hours he could lose.

This Resolution is my first attempt to get this system working properly. Vans will arrive at schools in time, and the minimum amount of teaching periods for school children will be lost. As you know, if you are running a mechanical system, Sir, you will get a flat tyre or something. That is why I have resorted to the extending of the school closing to 3.30 p.m. (*Asides.*) The Union is discussing it, and it is not to penalise teachers. It is just to make sure that if the van does not arrive with School Meals on time, then the children will not lose instruction during the day because they would be an extra half hour lunch which would be added on to the afternoon period.

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to burden the House with the old vehicles. I have everything here. I have the cost of repairs to vehicles and the year of purchase. This is just a Resolution so that I can order the vehicles. It is no sense waiting until next week. (*Asides.*) Well, the lorry was involved in an accident. The motor lorry which was provided for use in the School Meals Department has been used for transportation of material to schools, distribution of biscuits, collection of empty tins, and the collection of foodstuff from merchants, warehouses, as well as the Department's warehouse, and was purchased in December, 1970.

The motor lorry was extensively damaged in an accident on the 17th March, 1975, in St. Philip. The Mechanical Engineer in the Ministry of Communications and Works has stated that the lorry is so extensively damaged that it would be uneconomical to repair, and has recommended that it be sold by public auction.

The Secretary of the Standing Insurance Committee has advised that the sum of \$3,426, the pre-accident value of the vehicle, has been forwarded to the Accountant-General to be credited to the general use.

4.15 p.m.

Now we have been very fortunate because without the services of this motor lorry the work of the school meals system would be severely handicapped, and it has been. However, arrangements have been made with the Ministry of Communications and Works, the Superintendent of Prisons and the Commanding Officer of the Barbados Regiment for the loan of trucks to facilitate the smooth running of the transport operations, and I would like to pay tribute to them for the willing cooperation they have given; but it is not always possible, Mr. Chairman, to obtain help from these quarters at a time when the services of this particular truck are urgently needed, and it is not economical to rent a truck and therefore it is expensive.

There should not be much doubt about it. This is not controversial. I have only been in the Ministry since September 15 and this is my first attempt to try and solve some of the problems that will crop up from time to time.

I make no apologies for it. I maintain and I will repeat that to me the products of secondary schools and the products of universities come from the primary schools, and that is why I am visiting them to see the conditions under which teachers and pupils work; this is another attempt — since we have accepted school meals as an attempt to give the child a meal per day, that is why I am asking the indulgence of the Opposition to be able to get this Resolution passed in order to order these vans rather than waiting another week. So keen am I that I have asked this — I know that laying it, probably by next Tuesday it will be passed with minimum debate because I do not think the shadow minister will criticise this matter on education since I have just taken up, neither can the hon. member for St. Joseph nor the hon. member for the City, but I am only showing that so keen am I committed to seeing that primary schools get the best service, get the maximum teaching, that I have asked them to grant me their indulgence which they have so very kindly granted in allowing me to deal with this Resolution today.

I would like to assure hon. members that I met with the Head of the School Meals system a week ago, I have gone into the matter on the keeping of records, the question of spoilage of food and the question of discipline for school meals

officers which again is a problem where certain aspects of the service is concerned, and I have just drawn up a code of conduct and discipline for them and I have gone into the whole question and I shall monitor it, both the financial and operational aspects as well as every other aspect of it. At any rate do not let us cry down the School Meals System.

I have looked into the question of contract, the question of getting the best for the Government in seeing that now that beef is down in price the Government gets the benefit of this. I have looked into everything because I think hon. members know that I am committed to seeing that this aspect of education functions and functions well. There may be problems but I will monitor them.

I am not a Minister who sits down at my desk. I give instructions and I want them done. I do not see that there can be any quarrel with this Resolution because this is an attempt to try to solve a problem that can affect the teaching and learning of primary school children, and, as I said, I have before the union now the question of extending teaching hours to 3.30 p.m., give the teachers an extra half hour at lunch so that in case the vans arrive late the teachers and the children themselves would not suffer, because if you have children outside at 12 o'clock waiting for a van, by the time it comes it may be time for classes to resume, and sometimes some teachers cannot get back in the normal time and they cannot even get lunch, so this is an attempt to try to solve the problem urgently. I consider it a matter of urgency to meet a situation which I should like to assure the House I will keep under constant supervision.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I beg to second that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is.....

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, I know the question is, exactly how anxious is the present Minister of Education to get wrong things in the Ministry put right. (ASIDE) He says 'very keen' but he gives us to understand that in a short time he found quite a lot of things wrong in this very School Meals System. He has told us he has to look at the accounting, at the question of discipline, and that he is now faced with the transporation problem and all these things to the extent that he is satisfied that the system which has been operating in the past was costing the school children the loss of a half hour; in other

words, they were losing half an hour tuition per day and he has got to get the union to agree to discuss the question of teachers now remaining at school until 3.30 so as to accommodate the System better. You and I know, Sir, that teachers watch the clock until 3 o'clock, and when you invite them now to stay on until 3.30, do not mind if you give them ten hours for lunch time, when the clock strikes three they stop working and are looking to get home no matter how much the Minister and the union agrees.

However, it is a question that since the School Meals Scheme has been in operation, is the Minister satisfied that it has been extended sufficiently wide to cover a large enough number of children in the various schools or is it still a case where a child who enters school at the age of five is going to leave school at eleven plus and never taste school meals? That is exactly what has happened, because this Scheme was started in 1963 and you would understand how many children have been going to school day in and out just looking at the school meals, just hearing about school meals and have left school and have never tasted the thing called school meals. What the Minister is asking us to do is merely to do enough to keep the System moving. He has in truth and in fact told us very little apart from throwing out the hint that they intend to use the building at Lancaster to set up another School Meals Centre; apart from that he has told us absolutely nothing about the School Meals Programme.

Sir, he has told us that they have staff that could not be disciplined; that is what he has told us but in truth and in fact the Minister's task before us today ought to be with a Resolution with enough money to carry the School Meals Programme into each and every primary school in this Island. Is it fair, is it reasonable, is it just to ask us after so long — since 1963 this Scheme was going and some of these school children may have died and never tasted of the school meals and the Minister has got to see to the question of having a measure of control over these vans. You find, Sir, that these vans are out at night. To whom are they serving school meals at night? Some of these school meals vans are used as bedrooms at night in the green pastures and next day you are loading up these vans with food to feed the school children. You have to exercise some measure of control on these vans. You need a system like the sugar terminal trucks.
4.25 p.m.

When a sugar terminal truck leaves the country the driver has so much time to reach the sugar terminal; but the driver of the school meals

van will take up somebody's girl friend and drop them home instead of going back to his base. They are seen in Baxters Road and all about.

Let the Minister say that he will institute a better means of control over these vehicles. Let the Minister say that he will see to it that the lorry which goes into St. Philip goes at a proper time if it is executing the proper business of the programme. Let the Minister be honest about this matter. Do not let him tell us that it is not this and not that and the other.

We intend to fight the Minister even if it is a Resolution for no money if we see that it does not merit the support of this side of the House. We want the Minister to come and tell us the truth about this whole question. We excuse the Minister for the speech that he made saying that the former Minister did this and that. That is for the record; but the Minister cannot deny that he has been going from school to school.

The Minister should tell us how grieved he is to find 60 children in a class made for 30. Teachers cannot get around to do anything for the children as they would like to. Tell us that the teachers and the children must stand up for half an hour and will not continue to do so. The Minister is not familiar with these things. He has got to learn. He has got to go back to school.

I see that he is going to primary school where he will get the best start off on education. It is not merely a question of getting money to keep these vehicles going. That is not what we are concerned about. We want to hear the Minister tell us that within six months or within a reasonable time he will be seeing to it that each and every primary school is served with school meals. Let him tell us this. Let him tell us how many vehicles he foreshadows will be required to get this undertaking under way. Give us the full case and then we will feel that the Minister really wants to do something to improve the system that has been subjected to too much experiment and which in truth and in fact in the light of what the Minister found it necessary to deal with in a short day is too much for the new Minister to face up to in the present circumstances.

It is a fact, Mr. Chairman, that a large percentage of the children in the schools that are now served with the meals are taking advantage of the programme; but I want to tell the Minister that we cannot accept, and we know that there is no 90 per cent in any one school that is served with school meals, that is, taking advantage of the opportunity to partake of a meal. It is not 90 per cent at all.

If it were free I do believe that 90 per cent would be able to avail themselves of the meal. (ASIDE: Ten cents? They are talking about 10 cents?) The Minister is laying emphasis on 10 cents but the Minister must know that there are some households with three or four children turning out to school and the parents cannot put their hands on three or four 10 cent pieces when the children are leaving for school. The economic situation of this country does not permit.....

Mr. WEEKES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I would like the hon. member to know that those parents who have three or four children can apply for national assistance and this Government will grant it to them. (ASIDE: You are making fun.)

Mr. HINDS: I want the hon. member who just got up on a point of order to know that we are not a society of mendicants. Each householder would much prefer to be earning sufficient to provide a meal or pay for a meal for his own child.

What I think that the hon. member for St. Philip South ought to have reason to say is that the Minister has given instructions to the heads of schools that where they find that there are three or four children who really deserve a meal and their parents cannot afford to pay, the head has the authority to see that these children are provided with the meal in the same way as those who pay for it.

A parent would lose some days' work running about to various offices, and his children would die before he got 10 cents. You have to write up about a dozen papers before you get the 10 cents. What we are asking the Minister to do is to address his mind to the broader scheme of supplying all schools immediately if not sooner, with the meals.

The question of the secondary schools which ought to be served with the meals we will go into later; because there are many children attending secondary schools who are more in need of the meals than those attending primary schools. We would like the Minister to address his mind to the primary schools first. Time will be against him, however. He will not be in office when the time for improving the system comes.

4.35 p.m.

He has less than two months in office according to our electoral system; he will be out in the cold. He will be out begging for an opportunity to curse the Dean, but we leave him to the Dean. However, Sir, we are not opposing the voting of this money, but we would have preferred if the Minister had come for enough money to let each and every primary school or

elementary school, however he chooses to call them because he is now confusing the nomenclature since he became Minister, benefit. He has got to go back to school to learn and he has gone to the primary school which is the beginning of things, and I wish the Minister well.

Mr. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman, the system of Government in this country is such that if we on this side opposed the Resolution based on the fact that we are dissatisfied with the Minister's explanation of coming to the House for this money, but at the same time approving the granting of the money from the point of view of the children, you will hear on the political platforms and read in the newspapers that the Opposition opposed the passing of the sum of \$118,000 which would benefit the school children of this country. That is the problem with politics in this country. But Mr. Know-all is the type of person who believes he has got a plaster for every sore. He has got an answer for the indefensible; he can defend that which cannot be defended by anybody else. He will talk even though he knows it is wrong. This is why I am worried about some of these people who masquerade in certain institutions. (*A voice: He is a local preacher.*) You say he is a local preacher; I did not say so. His former Junior Minister has said so. I do not know what that means, whether it means dishonesty. That is between himself and his ex-Junior Minister to determine.

Mr. Chairman, there is something that worries me a lot in this Resolution. I have asked the Minister to explain the full circumstances of the motor lorry which was damaged in an accident. The most he is prepared to tell this Committee is that the Standing Insurance Committee says....

Hon. F. G. SMITH: On a point of order, he means he is asking. He had not spoken, so how could he have asked me to do something? I introduced the Resolution. His English really trips him up. He needs only to say I would like the Minister to tell me; he cannot say he has asked the Minister because he is only now speaking, so when would he be asking?

Mr. BOLDEN: English is a peculiar language, but commonsense seems to depart from a lot of people. When the Minister was on his feet.... (*Asides*) You see, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that some people like to take one thing today and another thing tomorrow. When the Minister was on his feet, in order to give him a chance to fully explain himself, I asked him to tell us about the accident and he responded.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: On a point of order, when I was on my feet, the hon. member for St. Joseph never interrupted me at all, so how could he have asked me to give him information. You, Mr. Chairman, would be aware of this. Had he done that I would have answered him, but he never interrupted my speech.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is why I say "you lawyers"!

Mr. BOLDEN: I agree with that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I was not referring to any hon. member. I was making a general remark.

Mr. BOLDEN: You were not talking about anybody in here. The last senior member for St. Joseph used to talk about lawyers and "awyers". The lawyers were on this side and the "awyers" were on that side.

Mr. Chairman, some time ago I raised the issue of Government's insurance policy. I was sitting when what I said in parliamentary language would be considered as an aside, but the Hon. Minister saw fit to give part of the information by listening to an aside. Let him get up and talk about that now. What he was prepared to say at that time was that the Standing Insurance Committee had made a report that the pre-accident value of the lorry was \$3,400 and that sum had been told to the Treasury to credit the account. What I am dealing with, Mr. Chairman, is this: every other insurance company in Barbados re-insures itself. If that lorry had been covered by a comprehensive policy and the Standing Insurance Committee had been re-insured by one of the other insurance companies, the value of the vehicle would have come back to Government. The hon. member for St. Peter asked the circumstances under which this lorry was damaged, and I am waiting on the Minister to tell us truthfully the circumstances under which this lorry was damaged, because I say here and now that I have been engaged in a case in the District "B" Court. A school meals van was in an accident at 7.45 one morning in a back road in St. George and the driver had no shame in saying that he was going to pick up his girl friend and somebody else to drop to work in Christ Church to get back to the school meals centre in time for work at 8.15. So when the hon. member for St. Peter asked about control of the vehicles in the school meals service, it is a valid claim made of no control over these vehicles.

It brings us to this point. When I asked the Minister which of the vehicles and he started

from 1967, I am moved to say that the Government has got its priorities wrong. We have had in this Chamber one of the biggest issues involving one of our overseas representatives when this Government came to this Chamber and asked the House to pass a massive sum to replace a motor car which was two years old, and the reason was that the representative had said it had stopped in rain in New York and he was not driving it anymore. The Hon. Prime Minister stood up in here and said that if you change them after two years you get a better trade-in value. But for the school meals service that provides a sort of meal for thousands of children in this country, the Minister has got the guts and the gumption to stand up and tell us that vans from 1967 have got to be replaced in 1975, and the total sum of money asked for to replace the lorry and six vans compared to what it took to replace one motor car in New York is negligible, but the Minister says he is trying to make progress. He has no shame whatsoever. One man can enjoy the luxury of a Lincoln Continental because it stopped in a little rain, but he knows as well as anybody else that the car did not stop in rain. It was because Waldo Waldron—Ramsey went from London to Washington and wanted a new car, and Livvy Goring wanted a new car also. (Asides) We are talking about the Government's request for \$118,000 to replace Government vehicles and the Standing Insurance Committee on the replacing of Government vehicles. That is what I am talking about.

4.45 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Education, an ex-Minister of Communications and Works should have acquired by now a knowledge of vehicles. He has to pay careful attention to the vehicles of the School Meals Service. I want the Minister to explain to us the circumstances of the accident at Six Roads with the lorry, and the Minister must give the House the assurance that under his supervision proper control will be made of the vehicles of the School Meals Service. You have seen them all parts of the Island at all times of the day, Mr. Chairman, so they must have a short life and unless the Minister places careful control on them this will continue. He must not now use the School Meals Service as it has been used before, he should go into it as a fair and upright Minister, he should look at the things which were wrong and try in the limited period which he has there at least to bring some sort of order into the School Meals Service. Not only the vehicles, Mr. Chairman, he must also look at the distribution of school meals to the schools, and if he wants examples of what happens when school meals reach the schools I can tell him that the officers

end up in court because so many things are taken out and a lot of them go to various homes at the end of the day. I will tell him where he can go. I can tell him that there was a big court case in St. Thomas where there was a fight over the distribution of the school meals not to the school children but among the top bracket, staff and school meals attendants, and I want the Minister to take a careful look into this whole school meals programme.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, it is indeed welcome to hear the Minister of Education of this country say that he is placing emphasis on the primary education in this country, because if one thing is true it is that during the entire regime of the Democratic Labour Party primary education has been neglected. I remember quite vividly the debate we had in here about two years ago when the Minister of Education supported me in certain remarks I made in relation to the standard of primary school education in this country. It is quite clear that over the years the emphasis was placed on secondary education because the glamour was there. It was the secondary education on which the Minister could make his mark, and I think that one of the best things ever to have happened to this country was the recent removal of the former Minister of Education from that Ministry in the sense that he has left that Ministry and the present Minister has gone there. I think it was very unfortunate that he was put in the Ministry of Health because I do not know what will happen to the health of the country. There is no doubt in anybody's mind, if you look at the record of that Minister, that it was one of pure incompetence. He may be the bright eyed boy of certain people in the Democratic Labour Party but his days are numbered and eventually if all things are considered — I will not say that he was weighed in the scales and found wanting — but certainly I can say that he made no contribution to education in this country because he had no policy. His policy was providing more school places, he was not concerned with the quality of the education, whereas the first Ministers, now the High Commissioner to London, policy ceased in January, 1962 because he campaigned with secondary education and after that he served no further useful purpose.

I look forward as some member says to the particular role of the present Minister if only because he has what to my mind to place the right priority on education in this country which is that he is concerned with education at the primary level. I share his priorities in that respect. The Minister has said that he has been going

around to the various schools looking at them, but I wonder how he feels. I know he has been very closely connected with primary education, but going to some of these schools I wonder if he asks himself if there is any substantial change between the quality of the education then and the buildings housing these primary schools, is there any difference between that particular time when he was a boy in the primary schools in this country. I am shocked when I think that in this day and age, I see that there are 117 primary schools and I would safely say that in most of these you still have a system of all the overcrowding that you find and it is not really conducive to good education. It would have been at least one redeeming feature on the part of the former Minister if some of the schools he had built were primary schools, but he was not concerned with that, there was no glamour in building primary schools, there was more glamour in building secondary schools, and now that the glamour boy has left there I think we will really get something done in education in this country.

I do not want to go into the incident about the vans because I do not believe the present Minister is responsible for what happened with the vans but I hope that the Minister would give instructions to see that they are used properly. I hope we will not have a situation as we have in the police department where there are a number of vans lying idle, not condemned by a Board of Survey, where they could be sold and the money sent back to the Treasury for the benefit of the country.

I am glad to see that this Minister is placing the right emphasis on primary education because I am one of those people who believe that in order for this country to progress properly, with all the benefits of secondary and university education you must have proper training at the primary level. I do not think we have had that under the past Minister and I hope that this Minister would give the correct emphasis on primary education in this country.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, when I hear a member of the Opposition whose party criticised school meals, and a member high up in their Government, a Minister, saying that he would sell the pots and pans for old iron, and they can get so vociferous and hot now about school meals, a policy initiated by the Democratic Labour Party, which they condemned and did not think it was possible, it is a sign of amusement to me and I wonder if the people of this country really judge them by what they have said.

4.55 p.m.

The whole School Meals redounds to the credit of the Democratic Labour Party, and they themselves thought it was impossible.

Mr. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Of course, the Minister wants to take a lot of credit for the School Meals. If he goes as far back as 1951, he will see that free School Meals formed a part of the Electors Association Manifesto and not the present Democratic Labour Party or the Barbados Labour Party. This is all the way back in 1951.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for the City pays tribute to his dead father in a roundabout way, but he is telling us that the Electors Association in 1951 were more progressive than a Labour Party, and that the known Conservatives in 1951 had more ideas than the Barbados Labour Party. When we come to 1975, Mr. Chairman, you will understand the position. I appreciate the tribute he has paid to his father who was then a big boy in the Electors Association.

Let me make this point. When you hear the member for St. Peter get up and talk as if this Government is retarding and not pressing on with a Scheme which it has initiated and which, in spite of the criticism of the then Opposition, today it has brought to the stage where it is feeding 30,000 children in this country, you will think that they were the negotiators of it and not the detractors of the Scheme. This Government is committed to feeding every single school child in the primary system.

Mr. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Hon. Minister must not say that the Barbados Labour Party is a detractor in the School Meals Scheme. That is unfair to the members of this Party. The Minister can show me nowhere that the Party's policy has ever been stated, and that the Barbados Labour Party was ever against free school meals.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, when the member said he was going to sell the pots and pans to Victor Chase for old iron, what was he going to do? Freddie Miller, who was Minister of Health, said so. You were so young you were probably studying in England. You would not know of those days. Mr. Chairman, these fellows just hang on to the Labour Party and use Sir Grantley's name as the veteran. They do not know what the Labour Party was like. They are just masquerading like people who came in late and are using a trade name. They use the B.L.P. as a trade name. All of them sitting over there do not know that the B.L.P. was ever about. It is

just that it has a small vestige of some sort of political whatever it is. They do not know its philosophy, if it ever had one. They criticised it, and the member for the City was probably studying or.....

Mr. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The member must not say that the Barbados Labour Party had no philosophy. If that were so, Sir, it was, perhaps, during the period when he was a member that it had no philosophy.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order!

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Not a member of the Opposition joined the Barbados Labour Party prior to 1961 when they lost power. He did not; the Leader of the Opposition was studying to be a Judge; the member who is Deputy Leader was nowhere around; the member for Christ Church West was studying to be something; the member for St. Peter was on the outside, and the member for St. Joseph was a lack-a-day saint. Not one of them came into the Barbados Labour Party prior to 1961 when they were defeated by the Democratic Labour Party. How can all of them claim, or can tell somebody about the history of the Barbados Labour Party?

But let me get back to this Resolution, because the people in this country do not understand that they are not Labour Party people and they are just using a trade name like Cave Shepherd was a business 100 years ago, or Barbados Fire. They claim that now they are working with Barbados Fire in 1975, they are Barbados Fire.

Mr. HINDS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. In 1961 I was helping to build the Democratic Labour Party of which he is now a member.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely no point of order! That is a point of interruption. The hon. member will take his seat!

Hon. F. G. SMITH: He was not in the B.L.P.

Mr. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What point of order?

Mr. BOLDEN: The member for St. Joseph is a lack-a-day saint, but the Hon. Minister is one who can only operate when he thinks he is in power. When he was in the Opposition, he ran

from this country and he came back and begged for a job.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order! It is a direct point of interruption!

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, what I am trying to point out is that when we come to this Parliament and hear the Opposition talk about a Scheme which we initiated, in spite of opposition, feeding nearly 30,000 children; committed to extending the Scheme to every single Primary School child in this Island, plus the Secondary Schools — (*Asides.*) I agree with you. When a child from poor parents passes the Common Entrance Examination and goes to Harrison College, or Lodge, it does not mean that he does not need a school meal. As a matter of fact, I am looking at the Scheme whereby, if possible, instead of having free Secondary Education, those of us who can pay should contribute money to help provide meals for the other children. I am looking at all of this. I am not agreeing to it. This is not a policy.

Mr. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Is the Minister now devising his own policy of education?

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I am.....

Mr. HINDS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Is the Minister advocating the abolition of free Secondary Education?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order!

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I am not advocating anything. What I am showing to the Opposition is that....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Both hon. members take their seats! Now, I have given sufficient latitude, and you are now going to deal strictly with the Resolution.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: What I am pointing out to you, Mr. Chairman, is that I am committed, as Minister of Education, to giving a free school meal to every single child. When I mention that I am pointing out that so concerned am I with giving free hot meals to the poor children at Secondary Schools that I am looking at every possible avenue to raise the money in some form to feed the children in Secondary Schools.

Mr. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Can this be the same Minister who criticized the Opposition last week when we talked about spending and wasting money on the

cave? You are now talking about the abolition of free Secondary Education and you are wasting money on caves!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order!

Mr. HINDS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Is the Minister now warning parents to beware of what is to come?

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I am not warning parents. I am telling parents now in this House on the 21st October, that I, as the Minister of Education, am committed to giving school meals to every single child in the Elementary Schools, to extend the system to every child in the Secondary Schools, and to....

Mr. HINDS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Is the Minister now telling us that he is committed to giving free school meals and not free secondary education?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order! Now, I am not going to allow this any longer.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: All I am saying is that I am committed to it. When I say that the Opposition is now joining on a band-wagon this is what I mean. We are committed to this. The hon. member for St. Peter wants me to tell him, or to come with a Resolution for all of the vans. You do not work a system in that way. My job is to up-date at the moment, first, all the School Meals rooms to the standard required by the Ministry of Health. My job is to ensure that all the Serving Centres conform with the requirements of the Ministry of Health. I have indicated to the House that we are extending the School Meals Scheme at Lancaster, St. James, to feed another 5,000 children. When I mentioned the question of looking, I am looking in every possible way to see that the poor children who pass the 11 plus and go to Harrison College, Lodge and Combermere — (Asides.) I agree with the hon. member for St. Peter that they need a hot meal, too. I am endeavouring to extend it as far as possible.

Mr. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I do not like the Hon. Minister to flirt around. I like him to tell us the position. Is he trying to tell the people of Barbados that those persons who can pay for Secondary Education must pay? I am asking for information.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order!

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I will give him the information. Under the educational system, as far as education at the Secondary Schools now

obtains, they will continue to obtain. Do you want more information than that?
5.05 p.m.

Mr. MOTTLEY: You said just now that some have to pay.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I did not say that. I said I am looking at every possible means whereby I can expedite a method whereby poor children at secondary schools can get a hot meal. That is what I said. Mr. Chairman, I will repeat for the record. I am looking at every possible means short of preaching the Government's educational policy of free secondary education, to see how I as Minister of Education can expedite the giving of school meals to the poor under-privileged children who were poor and under-privileged at the primary schools, who were fortunate to get a place in the secondary schools, how in the fastest way possible I can expedite giving them something; because in order to pass eleven plus and get to Harrison College they still need a hot meal as when they were at Wesley Hall or elsewhere. That is all I am saying.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Sir, the Minister told the House that he was looking at the System to give all children school meals; he was looking at a system whereby those who could afford to pay for free secondary education would have to pay for it. That is what the Minister said.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, the secondary education system, if you call it free or not, will continue indefinitely as long as I am in the Ministry of Education. All I am saying as Minister, I have got to use my brains. I have got to toss ideas.....

Mr. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Minister is obviously setting his tongue in motion before he sets his brain, because that is not what he said just now about free secondary education. He quite clearly stated that he was looking at it to see that those who could pay would have to pay for their education at secondary level, and now he is backing off of that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: All I am saying is that so committed am I to seeing that children of secondary schools get a hot meal, that I am tossing my mind on every permutation and possibility to see how I can speed up this system. That is all I am saying, and I will not argue any more because this scheme is not theirs.....

Mr. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.....

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Do you want to go and tell the public I say that I am going to abolish free secondary education? I want the public to know now that I have no intention of interfering with the existing secondary education system in Barbados as at present obtaining, and, I want the record to show that.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, that is what the hon. member is saying now, but that is not what he said earlier. He said earlier that he was going to make those who can pay, pay for education, and the Minister for Housing shook his head and said 'not me. I do not agree with that.'

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I have not made any contribution in this debate. How could he accuse me of making this statement? I have said nothing in this debate.

Mr. MOTTLEY: He made it from his seat, not standing, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, for the record, I, Frederick Gladstone Smith, Minister of Education, the member for South Central, St. Michael, here and now state.....

Mr. BOLDEN: Mr. Chairman,.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am on my feet; the hon. member should be taking his seat.

Mr. BOLDEN: All right, all right, I apologise, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like the hon. member for St. Michael South Central to realize that there is no Gladstone Smith in this Chamber.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the question be now put.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON: I beg to second that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is that the Resolution for the sum of \$24,000.....

Mr. MOTTLEY: The hon. member has made a motion, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: And it was seconded.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Therefore I can speak on the motion.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No. You cannot speak on the motion that the question be put. The hon. member must take his seat.

Mr. MOTTLEY: I have never seen the Hon. Leader of the House using the guillotine. This is indeed a strange thing, where the Leader of the House is going to use the guillotine against a front bencher, the Minister of Education who is expounding education policy.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman,.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot speak.

Mr. HINDS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. There is a motion before the House. The hon. member must take his seat.

The question that the Resolution for the sum of \$.....

Mr. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, that is wrong. The question is that the question be now put. That is the correct question for you to put, Sir.

The question 'that the question be now put' was put and resolved in the affirmative, the Committee dividing as follows:

AYES: Hon. C. E. TALMA, Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON, Hon. A. MORRISON, Hon. P. M. GREAVES, Hon. F. G. SMITH, Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE, and Mr. R. StC. WEEKES - 7.

NOES: Mr. MOTTLEY, Mr. HINDS and Mr. BOLDEN - 3.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Since according to the Standing Orders nine hon. members should have voted Aye, I declare that that has been lost.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, at the time I was replying and I have.....

Mr. BOLDEN: On a point of order (*Asides*).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: In short.....

Mr. BOLDEN: There is no in short, Sir. If we want to circumvent the Rules of this House, as far as I am concerned I am not going in for that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am not here to circumvent the Rules.....

Mr. BOLDEN: I did not say so, Sir. I am only drawing to the attention of the Chair the correct order in which it must be done. What the Chair has to declare is that the question cannot now be put.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I was speaking when the motion was.....

Mr. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Minister cannot now carry on, because the Leader of the House cannot rise on a point of order and move a motion that the question be now put. That can never be put on a point of order and therefore the Hon. Leader of the House could only make that motion if he was in order, and the only way for that motion to be in order is if he rose to speak.
5.15 p.m.

Then you will see, Sir, that no hon. member can rise in his place on a point of order and move that the motion be now put. If he is speaking, he can. (ASIDE: That is not true.)

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Any hon. member can rise in his place and move that the motion be now put. At the particular stage the hon. member for St. Michael South Central was replying to a motion. The hon. member for Christ Church East rose and made a motion that the question be now put. It was negatived and therefore the whole matter reverts to where it was before.

Mr. HINDS: On a point of order. It is undoubtedly unusual to find the Leader of the House using the guillotine on one of his own members.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: On a point of order.....

Mr. HINDS: On a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Mr. HINDS: I rose on a point of order and I was interrupted by the Leader of the House. A motion was put and lost. It means, therefore that the Minister against whom the guillotine has been used cannot continue. He cannot continue, nor can any member on this side of the House who has already spoken on the matter. It is left to any member on this side of the House or that side of the House who has not made a contribution to this debate to do so. Under Order 29 the hon. member is faced with the situation which the rules do not permit because you cannot put the question. (ASIDE: You can put it now.)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am putting the question.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, I am suggesting.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You are making a speech. If you look at Standing Order 36(2) you will see that the Chairman has the authority to put the question.

Mr. BOLDEN: On a point of order. With all due respect, Sir, we have run into a procedural difficulty, and the position is that the Minister was making a reply to allegations made by this side and at that point in time the Leader of the House got up. The Minister sat down. There was no point of order or anything. It meant that the Minister had sat down making his speech. The Leader of the House moved that the question be now put. Now that has been defeated, and the Minister cannot now resume the position as if it was a point of order because the rule says that after a question has been proposed a member rising in his place may claim to move "That the question be now put"; and, unless it appears to the Speaker or Chairman that such motion is an abuse of the rules of the House, or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the question "That the question be now put" shall be put forthwith and decided without amendment or debate.

2. When the motion "That the question be now put" has been carried, and the question consequent thereon has been decided, any Member may claim that any other question already proposed from the Chair be now put and if the assent of the Chair is given, such question shall be put forthwith and decided without amendment or debate.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if you want to put the question on your authority.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am asking the hon. member to read Paragraph 3 which says: "In any division upon a question for the closure of debate, that question shall not be decided in the affirmative unless it appears by the numbers declared by the Speaker or Chairman, that not less than nine Members voted in the majority in support of the motion."

Mr. BOLDEN: What has to be declared by you is that the question be now put. That having been lost, the member cannot now start again. If you, Mr. Chairman, want to close the debate by virtue that you feel that there has been enough debate on the question you can put the question; but not one of them over there can put the

question or open debate again. What has happened is that the Leader of the House has sabotaged the Minister of Education and you have to explain it now to the public.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: On a point of order. At the time that I rose I had not yet spoken. I have not yet spoken at all. (ASIDE: You cannot speak.) I can speak on a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There will be absolutely no point of order at this stage.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, Sir.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I said that at this stage there is no point of order. The hon. member will sit.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, I am rising on a point of privilege and not on a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of privilege?

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, I am entitled to rise to explain it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No explanation to the Chair. You must tell me what is the point of privilege.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, if you ask me a question, must I not give you a reply?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You must give an answer.

Mr. HINDS: A reply is not an answer?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Not necessarily.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to save the face of the Minister; but I think I had better take my seat.

The Question that the Resolution for the sum of \$118,000 do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
5.25 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of three Money Resolutions in Committee of Supply. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. C. E. TALMA, each seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSSON, the Resolutions were read a first, a second time and agreed to respectively.

THE FORGERY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1975.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the next Item is Order No. 2, which stands in my name, and it is to move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Forgery Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the Objects and Reasons set out, this Bill would amend the Forgery Act Cap. 133 in order to insert provisions relating to the forgery of passports and the procuring of a passport by the making of a false declaration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, quite recently the Commissioner of Police has drawn attention to a case where a person has obtained two passports in two different names, and has recommended that provision be included in the Immigration Act to make such occurrences offences. The Commissioner has pointed out that in each case baptismal and birth certificates were produced in support of the particular applications. It is possible, Sir, that in one case at least a false identification was given, but it is also possible that in both cases false information might have been given. The matter was referred to the Attorney General and it was agreed that the Act be suitably amended. The Minister supports any measures which will reduce or possibly eliminate the opportunities for persons to obtain passports by providing false information. For that reason we have got the amendment to the Forgery Act in order to make it an offence for people who give false information in order to procure passports.

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

Hon. A. MORRISON: I beg to second that.

Mr. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to talk about the question of passports in general, and I think the Leader of the House should get some idea of the problems and difficulties which are faced by people seeking passports. I do not know how genuine the particular incident drawn to the attention of the Hon. Minister for Legal Affairs happens to be so far as one may consider it a forgery, but I do know there are other instances in which people cannot obtain correct baptismal certificates or indeed sometimes birth certificates because of the difficulties surrounding the keeping of records, particularly where births occur prior to the year 1890. In my experience I have come across a case where a gentleman was given, I think, two birth certificates pertaining to his own birth with a lady with a similar name as his mother, the sex correct, the place of birth

Vauxhall correct, and a birth date which might have approximated to his birth date, since in many instances it seems in those times people never really recorded the correct birth dates. Now he used that document in the first instance coupled with a baptismal certificate to try to establish his right to a passport. There was no doubt he was born in Barbados. A little later it was discovered that that certificate did not relate to him at all; it related to somebody else and obviously you are going to get many cases in which there is really no genuine forgery, and I would wish when this new section of the Forgery Act is going to be enforced that one should use a certain amount of discretion when information comes before the immigration authorities, because there is no doubt that our birth and baptismal records prior to the beginning of the 20th Century were not kept in proper order.

I should also like to state that it has come to my attention that the returns which should be made from various churches concerning marriage and various other keeping of records, birth and baptismal records, are not coming forth promptly, and this could lead to some difficulty, and I have drawn it to the attention of the Minister in the hope that some public statement will be made through the Government Information Office to draw to the attention of the priests concerned and other people who hold themselves forth as members of the cloth to make quick returns to the Record Office so that there can be no problem concerning the obtaining of accurate information.

With regard to passports, I would like to use this opportunity to point out to the Minister that there has still been no change in the administrative practice whereby married women cannot get their passport in their maiden names. I believe the Passport Office should have strict instructions on this matter, and there is no reason why a married woman must necessarily lose her maiden name, because she is married. In my view it is a practice which of course smacks of discrimination against women.

Now administratively let me talk about the passport office. As I said earlier I should like to point out that the passport office is one of the most efficient departments of the Police Force and of Government. I do not know how many members in this House visit that office regularly, but I do and I have noticed that there are very cramped for space. Since 1966 they have had to deal with thousands and thousands of cases and collect considerable revenue for the department, and it seems to me to eliminate errors that are likely to occur, and in order to give them proper

working accommodation they should have additional space for the keeping of proper records, and they should have additional space so that the people who work in the office can feel comfortable in their working conditions.

5.35 p.m.

At present, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are about nine or ten people working in a space which is less than from the Speaker's Chair to the Bar of the House in this centre here, and that space is crammed with chairs, desks, passports heaped up on the ground and past records, and they are expected to produce – quite fortunately for us they have produced at a great rate in that limited space. I think that the Minister who is responsible should be aware of this and should take adequate steps to improve the space which is available to them.

Finally, we can anticipate that we will get forgery from time to time. International crime syndicates are not unknown to favour Barbados as a home, and they shelter behind all sorts of establishments. People who are adept at forging passports are not unknown on these shores. I would like to issue a warning however to the police to ensure that regardless of who you are and what names you use that people are not allowed to use duplicate and triplicate passports in Barbados as we see obtaining in the international crime syndicates and in espionage throughout the world, and I think our Police Force must be on its toes on this point and I hope that we will not hear if this situation should occur in Barbados that the law has not been updated to meet it.

Mr. BOLDEN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when one deals with people of the less fortunate class in our society one tends to have some sympathy when you hear of people obtaining passports under different names and for various reasons. I can see why people might go to this extent, it is simply because in Barbados today we have a lot of people who are unemployed, a lot of people who are employed but are ambitious, we have a lot of people who would like to visit the larger countries like the United States and Great Britain, and at the same time we have the countries which have set up insurmountable barriers even to genuine visitors.

I have a case dealing with now where the visa officer of one of these big countries has adopted the principle of writing in passports "applied for entry permit on -- date but refused." I have a passport holding now where it is written three times and the lady is now complaining that even when travelling throughout the Caribbean

every immigration officer looks up at her two and three times. What would you expect that lady to do? She wanted to go to Britain on a holiday, she applied for a visa, it was refused and they wrote it in her passport. When you go to the United States Embassy and you do not succeed in your application they give you a slip of paper, but if the British officer is so lazy that he cannot keep proper records and has decided on this course this is the sort of thing that will happen later, and the Government should investigate the particular case first and do not come and amend the laws to satisfy somebody. If the Government wants me to I will produce the passport tomorrow morning to show them the writing in it. I am going to give an undertaking now that I am going to send that passport to the Minister of External Affairs and I want a public declaration on it. I want a public declaration on the right of any visa officer in this country to write into a passport which is the property of the Barbados Government. It is not even the property of the lady in question. I have constantly said that Ministers must not allow Civil Servants to tell them to come in here with explanations on Bills unless they investigate the true cause.

I know of a case in the U.S. Embassy where a woman applied under three different names for visas and each time they have been able to check and countercheck that she had applied on a previous occasion and they gave her a slip saying "U.S. immigration law says that a person who cannot show he has a job to come back to may not be granted a visa to enter the United States." When we hear of forgery in passports and birth certificates, human nature is such that if a man wants to do something sufficiently bad, not bad in the criminal sense, but to such an extent that he might go to devious practices to get there. This girl has all her relatives in Britain, she wanted to do a Secretarial course which is not available to her in Barbados, but they just refused her an entry visa. These are the problems when it comes to passports. This is what the Government should look at first.

The Government should investigate the means of issuing visas to Barbadians wanting to travel abroad. Every morning you listen to the 7 o'clock news and you hear that this news is brought with the compliments of British Airways. You hear BWIA has a man who tells you to visit London, to go up to Birmingham and to visit this castle and that, but go to Roebuck Street and ask for a visa and you cannot get one. The same Tom, Dick and Harry coming from up there come down to Barbados without a visa. I heard the Minister of Tourism who spends his time flying up and down telling you that Barbados is

open to tourism so you cannot put too many restraints on people coming in, but at the same time you have advertisements telling Barbadians to visit these lands but they cannot get out. I am sure when the Minister was investigating, if he did investigate it, he found that the case for forgery brought to his attention by the Commissioner of Police had been about a person who had been away on the immigration scheme, broke the contract, met with a young lady and spent an extra six months up there, worked for enough money and can now genuinely go on a holiday.

5.45 p.m.

Is he denying them the right of a holiday because they broke the contract? He is seeking to find a passport in the belief that nobody would recognise him by name. I have dealt with a case in this country where one brother went to the United States genuinely, and the other brother went on a contract and was deported within two weeks. He went back again in the name of the other brother who was in the United States. When the other brother came down here to get his permanent visa, he was told: "No. You are in the red book; you ran away." We had to go through a series of affidavits from the Labour Department, etc., but the United States Government accepted that this was the wrong man. They did not write anything in his passport, and the man went back to the United States.

I want the Leader of the House to pay careful attention to what I have said. I want to hear the Government on whether or not the Visa Officer in Britain or somewhere else is entitled to write things in people's passports, because it looks like a smear upon the character of the holder of the passport. If that young lady goes to the Police Station now and declares that she never had a passport — because she cannot get a new passport as long as she holds one — in order to erase this writing, I suppose she will fall under this Act and will be prosecuted through no fault of her own in order to save face. The Minister must not allow laziness to be the excuse for legislation in this Parliament, because somebody tells you to put a Section here and there without finding out the root cause of why an offence has been committed. You must remedy the root cause and there will be no offences. That is how I see it.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be very long on this issue. There is one problem that keeps cropping up, and it is in relation to the character of persons who apply for Character Certificates in order to go overseas. Very often you will find that a person who

applies for a Character Certificate may have had a conviction some twenty or twenty-five years ago as a young boy. If he applies to go overseas now under the present system, the conviction will be placed on the Character Certificate as a mark against him. I would like to urge the Government to look at this system again and see whether a person, who has had a conviction, could not be given a clean bill of health after 20 years. That person may have committed some criminal offence in his very young days, either as a juvenile, or at the age of eighteen or nineteen, and he may have changed his ways. I do not see why that conviction should be put on his Certificate of Character at that stage, 27 years later when he is 45 and wants to go abroad.

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

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

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and they stood part.

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

On the separate motions of Hon. C. E. TALMA, each seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the FORGERY (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1975.

THE GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION OF BARBADOS (INCORPORATION) BILL, 1975

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new Item is Order No. 3 which stands in my name, and it is to move the Second Reading of a Bill to incorporate the Girl Guides Association of Barbados. As the objects and reasons set out, this Bill would provide for the incorporation of the

Girl Guides Association of Barbados and for connected purposes. As hon. members would fully realise, there can be no gainsaying the fact that the Girl Guides Association of Barbados has made and is continuing to make a notable contribution, and is playing a very worthy role in the interest of the National Development in Barbados.

The Girl Guides Association is now seeking to be incorporated by statute for the purpose of preserving the protection of its activities and interests hitherto afforded to it by the Act of Parliament.

5.55 p.m.

Of course the Girl Guides Association of Barbados has been from its very inception a branch of the United Kingdom Girl Guides Association, a body which is established by Royal Charter and the Girl Guides Association Act of 1932(3) protected the activity and interests of the Association by the creation of certain offences and the provision of penalties. This Act of 1932(3) makes it unlawful for any unauthorized person to use the uniform, badge, token or emblem of the Association, or for any person to form, organise or become concerned in forming or organizing any corps or Body which without the authority granted under the Royal Charter of the Association, claimed or purported to be girl guides or to be otherwise connected with the Association.

So that under the existing present status they have certain penalties, and certain things are offences. However, the Girl Guides Association was informed that the policy of the Government is not to pass legislation by Act of Parliament in order to incorporate an organization, but it is done under Section 21 of the Companies Act of 1910(7). However, the Girl Guides Association wants to retain the protection which they have for their activity and interests as at present under the Act of 1932. So they have insisted and have put up a case and the Cabinet has considered this matter.

What I am saying, Sir, is this. It is the policy of the Government not to grant incorporation by Act of Parliament but in this particular case the Cabinet feels that as 1975 is International Women's Year and in view of the fact that women's organizations in Barbados are anxious to report, that the Government is demonstrating its declared intention of support for the equality of women and the women's liberation movement, and further for the additional reasons, that is, that the Government and people of Barbados (1) have always shown great refinement and courtesy

in the attitude towards women (2) now desire to make further gestures of support and goodwill towards the present and future generations of women, and (3) wish by another token to reaffirm their solidarity with women everywhere; and (b) that the Girl Guides Association has always played a worthy role in the interest of national developments.

The Cabinet feel that the request of the Girl Guides Association of Barbados should be acceded to and they should be granted their request for the Girl Guides Association of Barbados to be incorporated by an Act of Parliament, which we are doing today; but it is contrary to the policy of the Government to bring in legislation of this nature because this same purpose could be served and achieved under the Companies Act of 1910.

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

Mr. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to second this Bill, and I second this Bill to show that it has no partisan political significance whatsoever, and indeed has the support of all persons in Barbados who are conscious of the outstanding principles rendered by the Guide and Scouting Services not only throughout the world but here in Barbados.

Certainly it is a well known fact that sometimes our colonial masters did perform acts worthy of note in these countries. One of the things they did was certainly to hand us down in a charitable field certain associations which have established their worth and value in our country, and the good work of the people like the Baden Powells have been manifested many times over by the example set by the Guide movement in the charitable and other work which they have performed for the young people of Barbados.

I do not think that the Minister needed to have given us any apologies for Cabinet's departure from its policy of not allowing certain associations of a voluntary nature to have the grace of an Act of Parliament. I think that part of that policy should state clearly that some associations are of such national importance that Parliament owes these associations a duty indeed to incorporate them by special Act of Parliament; and this is one such association. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must not let the hon. member of the House get away with such a good Bill and be using it for an occasion for giving the Government any encomiums at all for its policy in International Women's Year.

It is true that the Girl Guides of Barbados have shown the outstanding qualities which the women of this country possess, and indeed I have frequently cited them as another reason why the Government should be ever anxious to confirm full equality on women of Barbados; but I am amazed that if this is all that the Government is really going to seriously do for women in International Women's Year to prove that they are wedded to the concept of equality of women and that they recognize women's liberation movement, then they have fallen flat on their faces.

This Government voted against the setting up of a National Commission for the Rights of Women; voted against it, down to every man and woman on purely partisan political ground. And indeed it is still true that we are crying out for proper approach in 1975 to the whole question of women's rights.

I am glad the Government has now seen that the girl guides could show what women are truly worth; and I am appealing to the Government. There are only two months to go. Reverse yourselves; set up a proper National Commission of the rights of women, explore the areas in which there are still discriminations against women, pass equal rights legislation especially in the field of equal pay so that private industry will give women their true rights; abolish the administrative discriminatory practices like the one I cited for passports against women, compel employers in town to stop discriminating against women on the basis of their marriage or their sex, in advertisements, bonuses being given to them in their careers, in their promotion prospects, and monitor the position properly.

I am glad that the Hon. Leader of the House for whom I have the greatest of respect — and I wish to emphasise this; this is not a criticism of him indeed in person — but I am glad he has given me the opportunity on this Bill to state that the Government is not doing enough for International Women's Year or for women's rights in general.
6.05 p.m.

If a Civil Servant has written reasons 1 and 2 which he cited as reasons why the Government had to depart from its policy concerning the incorporation of voluntary organisations in Barbados, those are no proper reasons at all.

The Government must not hide behind this beautiful set of speeches. Women are God's most gracious and beautiful creatures. Of all the art

forms that we have had there is no art form more beautiful than a woman; and whenever I get up in here I can see the recognition of this truth on the faces of hon. members; and what I am asking is that they express their appreciation in this House and this Chamber and in no other chambers for the time being.

The women of Rome used to punish their husbands if the husbands did not come up to mark in looking after women's rights. The women would withdraw themselves. I would not like to think that the petticoats would be denied to the men of this Chamber; but I am appealing to whomever has the ear of the Government — I apparently do not have it. Unfortunately, I am a convinced women's liberation man, and I make no bones about that. I am appealing to the Government, not because legislation was brought by me and rejected for that reason — I am appealing to the Government to take immediate steps before International Women's Year is gone, to take positive steps to establish women's rights in this country.

One thing that one can say about the Girl Guides Movement is that they have always been willing and ready to come to the aid of community interests and development regardless of the political constitution of the Government which we had in this country. I hope that their administrative structure will be so streamlined that they will continue the good work that they have done in this country since 1930.

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

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

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

Clauses 1 to 9 inclusive of the Bill were called and they stood part.

Clause 10 was called.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 10 stand part.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

Mr. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, before you put the question — I am not going to hold up the Bill

— but I am giving the Minister a suggestion which may in future be drawn to the attention of the Ministry of Legal Affairs. Although it is usual that associations should have a permanent address in Barbados for the purpose of the service of documents, most of the Bills that come before us are not making provision for these addresses to be filed with the Registrar, and a lot of difficulties can arise in serving documents on the officers. I believe that where we are introducing legislation such as this or bringing in new legislation we should try to put in a provision that the association must give notice to the Registrar of Companies of its address in Barbados, for the service of documents, and the names of the officers to whom the service should be directed.

The Question that Clause 10 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clauses 11 to 14 inclusive of the Bill were called and they stood part.

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

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and Mr. CHAIRMAN reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, the Bill was read a third time passed and cited as The Girl Guides Association of Barbados (Incorporation) Act, 1975.

THE BILL TO AMEND THE SUGAR WORKERS (PROVIDENT FUND) ACT

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the next Order of the Day is to move the second reading of a Bill to amend the Sugar Workers (Provident Fund) Act. It stands in the name of the Hon. Minister of Housing, Lands etc.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is considerable fragmentation in our welfare laws and related matters. We have the Sugar Workers (Provident Fund) Act being administered by one Board and we have the Sugar Workers (Severance Payments) Act administered by

another Board, and we have National Insurance and National Assistance being administered by another Board.

From time to time we have stated that it is the policy of the Government to bring the Welfare Service under the ambit of the National Insurance Board. In fact we have done this with Severance Payments. We have made arrangements in this Bill to transfer the administration of the Sugar Workers Provident Fund from the Sugar Workers Provident Fund Board to the National Insurance Board.

6.15 p.m.

At the same time we brought the Sugar Workers' Severance Pay Act to be administered by the same board. This to me is another step at centralising these many services to be administered by the National Insurance Board, and this, Sir, is the purpose of this Bill, to remove the administration of the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund from the Board that now administers it under the Chairmanship of the Chief Labour Officer to be administered by the National Insurance Board. Those who have read the Act will realise it has its own fund to be kept separate and distinct from the National Insurance Funds and audited separately.

These are the principle features of this Bill, and I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

Mr. BOLDEN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no quarrel with the Bill, but what I am worried about is that Government constantly make decisions which affect specific areas of the public and there is no announcement of any kind. In this particular Bill I have been faced over the last few months with people who have become of age to receive benefits from the Provident Fund and when they go to the Labour Department which is the usual place, they have been told not to bring the applications there, but to take them up to the National Insurance Office, and nobody at the Labour Department has explained. (Hon. P. M. GREAVES: What is that?)

For the benefit of the Minister of Labour I will repeat what I have said. Within the last few months people who have become of age to receive Provident Fund benefits have made out the necessary forms and taken them to the Labour Department and have been told that

they are not receiving them, but that they must take them to the National Insurance Department. (*Asides*) Now I am hearing that is wrong. I have repeated for the Minister while he is sitting down, and I will give way for him to get up and make a statement, because I have got in my office forms which people have returned to me with because the Labour Department would not take them, and as I said before the Government makes decisions, they do not publicise them and the people who have to deal with the public do not treat the public in any courteous manner by explaining what is going on. If it is wrong, it is not my fault because if the Government was making a change over and it had done the necessary publicity on this, then people would know exactly what is going on. (*Asides*)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister has the right to reply.

Mr. BOLDEN: All I say is that the Act is now being passed for the first time, so the Labour Department is doing something contrary to the law, and I would like the Minister to make a statement on the floor of the House so that the papers would record it and they would know, because tomorrow morning I will carry my forms back down for the man from my constituency who has been told not to bring it there but to carry it to the National Insurance Office. I would like the Minister to make a statement to clarify the issue for those workers at the Labour Department that they must accept the forms of persons who have become of age so that not only those at the Labour Department would know, but the public at large would understand what Government is doing. Something must have gone from one department to the next for clerks at the Labour Department to be telling people that if they come of age as from 6th January their papers are now to be handled by the National Insurance Office. I alone do not know that; the member for St. Peter knows it as well. If the Minister does not know, somebody has given instructions contrary to the policy of Government. Something is wrong somewhere and I would be glad if the Minister would make a declaration and to what the true position is.

Mr. HINDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the situation as I understand it is that from 6th January this year any sugar worker who had made an application to the Provident Fund Board would receive only his Provident Fund benefit from the Board, but would no longer be entitled to any benefit arising from having

reached 65 years from the National Insurance Fund, no matter how many contributions he made to National Insurance. (Hon. P. M. GREAVES: That is a different matter.) It means therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in the past what a sugar worker got from the Provident Fund Board bore no relation to what benefit he got on attaining the age of 65 years and retired from work, because as soon as he reached 65 years he is no longer eligible for work and he is automatically struck off the role, because the Provident Fund would not take any more contributions on his behalf. The situation as I have explained makes it now abundantly clear that the worker who would have got a benefit on reaching 65 years from the National Insurance can no longer receive that benefit and the benefit from the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund as well, bearing in mind that the benefit from the National Insurance Board would have arisen out of his being employed in whatever capacity, but that a certain number of contributions would have been paid by the worker himself and by his employer into the National Insurance Fund separate and distinct from that for the back-breaking and laborious work, as labelled by the Minister of Finance, which those people performed in the cane fields and on the sugar plantations.

One must know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that what gave rise to the establishment of the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund was definitely the conditions under which these people slaved over the years on these plantations and the cane fields, and then to find the type of living or existence they had to eke out after having made such a valuable contribution in the field of labour to the building of this society. The Sugar Workers' Provident Fund was established to become more or less the last minute saviour of these workers to help them to acquire or achieve something to make them feel that all of their labours were not in truth and in fact in vain; but now the National Insurance Fund was established with a view to having a worker contribute, having his employer make a contribution, and the Government throwing in administrative costs to some extent at least in the early stages, and to provide for some benefit, some pension to help the worker when he had retired on reaching the age of 65 years. The worker in the past was assured of his Sugar Workers' Provident Fund benefit whatever it amounted to, in addition to his National Insurance pension. Through the transfer of the administration of the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund to the National Insurance Scheme the worker now stands to lose. Mr. Deputy Speaker,

it does not affect the artisan, the carpenter, the mason or that type of worker, or the shop assistant, but it definitely does affect the sugar worker because he can now only hope to get what he was entitled to as a labourer in the fields.

6.25 p.m.

It definitely affects the sugar worker because he can now only hope to get what he was entitled to from his labours in the fields. We would like to hear then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what explanation the Minister of Labour has to give on this very grave matter, because if we are to learn from the Minister that by transferring all of this administrative bit of machinery from the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund Board to the National Insurance Board that a sugar worker is going to suffer the loss of anything that normally would have accrued to him as a worker, because it is as a worker that he makes his National Insurance contribution and it is as a sugar worker that he derives what benefits one normally gets from the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund Board. I would like to hear therefore from the Minister of Labour a clear explanation, because remember the sugar workers are disturbed. Those who have heard of what is taking place are no longer easy in mind and an explanation on their behalf is what we are asking from the Minister at this hour.

Mr. FORDE: I just want to say a few words on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If the functions are being transferred I wonder whether the Minister can assure the House that there will be as much if not more speed in processing the payment of pensions from the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund to those persons who are entitled to them. I know that last year there had been some delay in the disbursement of funds since the fund apparently did not have enough money and there had to be a supplementary vote from the House in order to assist the fund. Since most of the matters concerning pensions are now being dealt with under the National Insurance scheme it seems to me that it would be in order to effect the transfer with the centralisation of information and because the functions are similar. I would hope that the National Insurance Board has the staff and is sufficiently streamlined to expedite the payment of pensions.

I think the hon. member for St. Peter was talking about the substantive position where Parliament regretfully passed an amendment to the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund Act of 1968, Cap. 271 to prevent a pension under the Provident Fund Act from being paid to a sugar worker who qualifies from 6th January, 1975 for

a National Insurance pension. I think that in retrospect one has to look at this situation again. There are still a large number of persons in Barbados who are receiving not only their pensions under the National Insurance scheme but are also receiving pensions from private sources. They do this because they and their employers pay their usual National Insurance contribution like all self-employed persons should, and in addition the industry under which they work also make arrangements for supplementing that pension. It seems to me that the Provident Fund may be considered a pension scheme pre-existing the coming into being of the National Insurance Act and it would be in order therefore for us to re-establish this situation particularly as I notice the pensions being paid under the Provident Fund are really negligible. I infrequently have to countersign cheques for retired sugar workers, and I remember one particular case where this gentleman worked all his life in the sugar industry and his total pension amounted to something like \$47, and I believe he gets this every two months. By any stretch of the imagination this old man cannot live on \$47 every two months, but he has really given his years to the sugar industry as a whole. Unfortunately for him he retired before he was able to make a contribution under the National Insurance scheme, he was past the age, and he obviously has to rely on the good offices of children, relatives and friends, but I wonder how many of us in our community recognise that there are people who are really existing on very little, and I wonder whether the Government could not in the boom years of sugar like now look again at its policy on this aspect of the sugar workers' contribution and repeal the amendment of 1974 so as to permit the sugar workers to get the extra \$5 a week which they formerly got.

I do not represent a constituency that is largely agricultural, in fact I have a few sugar workers in the Fordes Road — Bonnetts area. By and large I represent a constituency where people are employed in commerce, in the hotel industry or in the service, but I realise that even in the hotel industry provisions are made by the employers to supplement National Insurance pensions up to a minimum wage level that would allow an individual not to go beyond the red line. I know that in the last election the question in our Manifesto about a minimum wage level was severely misunderstood. I am saying that there is a cut off line below which no individual should be asked to eke out a living and I believe in this so strongly that I feel that people who have a lot should be taxed to pay for those who cannot

afford a lot. I am not one of those who believe in a society where you can have a few people as millionaires and the balance below the red line, and that is what I am asking the Minister to look at. Wherever we find a large group like sugar workers barely eking out a living, those of us who are better off must give up some of the sweets to let them have some human dignity.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems as if some confusion has crept into this debate here this afternoon and I will try to get the matter in its right perspective. First of all, we have the National Insurance Scheme which is a contributory scheme providing pensions for persons of the age of 65 years and over.
6.35 p.m.

Then in 1968 the Provident Fund Bill was enacted and became law providing pensions for those persons who worked in sugar. Long before this a fund was established, and it was the intention that the earnings of the capital would be used for financing the payment of pensions to sugar workers. Even the Sugar Producers, the Sugar Overlords in Barbados, who were familiar with the employment in the country severely underestimated those persons who should benefit from the Provident Fund Pension Scheme going back to the year 1956 and coming forward. When the Scheme was implemented, in fact, there were several times more persons who were on the Scheme than had been bargained for. Far from being able to finance the pensions out of the earnings of the fund, in order to pay the pensions to the persons who earned them, we had to go into the capital of the fund and pay pensions. When one eats into the capital, one has to understand what happens to the fund. The fund is disappearing, and that is precisely what happened. The fund, after paying a considerable number of pensions, completely disappeared and there was no more money out of which to pay pensions to sugar workers.

We had to amend the Act in the early 1970s, 1972 or 1973, in order to use some other monies of a levy to pay pensions. Towards the end of last year there was also no money in that fund to pay the sugar workers, and we reached a very embarrassing situation. We clearly could not go on, year after year, with a situation where people are entitled to money, they had been drawing the money, and then for weeks not been able to get it. (*Asides.*) I explained that we had to use the sugar levy, and that was spent as well. We could not continue with this situation, so what was done by this Parliament less than a year ago, to be precise, on the 30th December, 1974, unanimously, was that after a date to be named,

6th January this year, a sugar worker would not qualify for two pensions, but it was not as simple as that.

Before that the Government had worked out a Scheme whereby the sugar worker would be no worse off and would not have done it if we had something to pay the two pensions. There is no point coming back now and talking about the two pensions, or a worker previously being entitled to two pensions and is now getting one. In fact, he is no worse off, and I will explain what I am saying. The workers until then were drawing a meagre pittance in pensions from National Insurance. I think it was \$5.00 to \$6.00 a week, and some a bit more. Then some sugar workers were drawing from the Provident Fund \$3.60 a week in pensions. Add the two of those together, and what do you get? Let us take the figure of \$6.00. You get about \$9.00, \$10.00, \$11.00, or \$12.00 a week in pensions. What did the Government do? In order to save the embarrassment of not having any funds left to pay people because of the underestimation, the Government decided that there should be a minimum payment of \$15.00 for National Insurance. Those persons who were drawing two pensions before and getting only about \$9.00, \$10.00, or \$11.00 would thereafter, which would be from this year, get \$15.00 a week as a minimum pension. In other words, the two were consolidated and they were getting more.

Now, this could only operate for persons who had not yet qualified for severance pay. It could not operate for persons who had severance pay from a permanent fund. It could not operate for persons who were already drawing from the Provident Fund. It could only operate for the future for persons who had not yet qualified. The Government would not have been in a position to do this if the intention was not to amalgamate the two Pension Funds. At some time in the future Government is working towards paying pensions from a single source, and that is the Corporation set up for this purpose. This is what it is working towards. From January this year, for those persons who then would not have qualified for pensions under the National Insurance — they have several people who have retired before they had made a contribution to the National Insurance Scheme, and those persons who have made contributions, but have not made the minimum number of contributions and, therefore, were not eligible for a pension under the National Insurance Scheme. Such persons are only eligible for a single pension. That is under the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund.

I repeat, so that I cannot be misunderstood, that there were sugar workers who, for one

reason or another, either because they had not contributed, or they had not contributed enough, would not qualify for pensions under the National Insurance, but at the same time they would have qualified for a pension under the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund. For those persons the weekly pension was increased from \$3.60 from this year to \$5.00. (*Asides.*) I agree with you, but this is what the fund can carry. You can do this much and no more. It is a lot more than they were getting under a previous regime. In a sense they, too, were marginally better off.

All I want to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the fact of the marriage of the two Funds has not made the sugar worker any worse off. As a matter of fact, he is now better off. He is now better off, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the amount of pension that he can draw than before we amalgamated the two Funds and which Parliament unanimously agreed to in December of last year. That disposes of that question.

May I come on to those points made by the hon. member for St. Joseph. I have said earlier that some confusion has crept into this matter and the lines appear to have been crossed at a certain point. If any officials of the Labour Department are telling persons, who now qualify for money from the Provident Fund, to go to the National Insurance, it is merely for the purpose that it is the National Insurance now, since this year, that pays the consolidated pension, but the National Insurance does not administer the Provident Fund. This is an anomaly; this is another situation.

6.45 p.m.

That is why this Bill is before Parliament today, to place the administration of this fund right at the source where the fund is being paid out. That is all; but this fund is still being administered by the Labour Department and will continue so to be administered until this Act is passed and the Governor-General has proclaimed a day as the appointed day when all of this should come into effect. I hope.....

Mr. HINDS: Sir, would the Minister explain to us, if there is a case where a sugar worker has received benefits from the National Insurances but they are now ready to give him his Provident Fund pay, if what he has already received will be deducted from the Provident Fund total?

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I explained that it is a consolidated pension now, and the minimum has to be \$15; so that from the beginning of January this year he was only getting one

pension. I tried to explain that there are some persons who would get pension from the Provident Fund but would not have got any from the National Insurance, and those persons would now have to go when this Act is passed and when the Governor General proclaims the appointed day, they will then have to go not to the Labour Department, if that is where they draw their pension, but then would have to go to the National Insurance and that is where they will draw their pension.

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

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

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

Clauses 1 to 8 of the Bill were called and they stood part.

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

On the separate motions of Hon. C. E. TALMA, each seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Sugar Workers' (Provident Fund) (Amendment) Act, 1975.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this concludes Government Business for today's Sitting, subject to any matter with which the Opposition might wish to deal. (A Pause)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 4th November, 1975 at 12 Noon.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

The Question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly at 6.55 p.m.